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Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror

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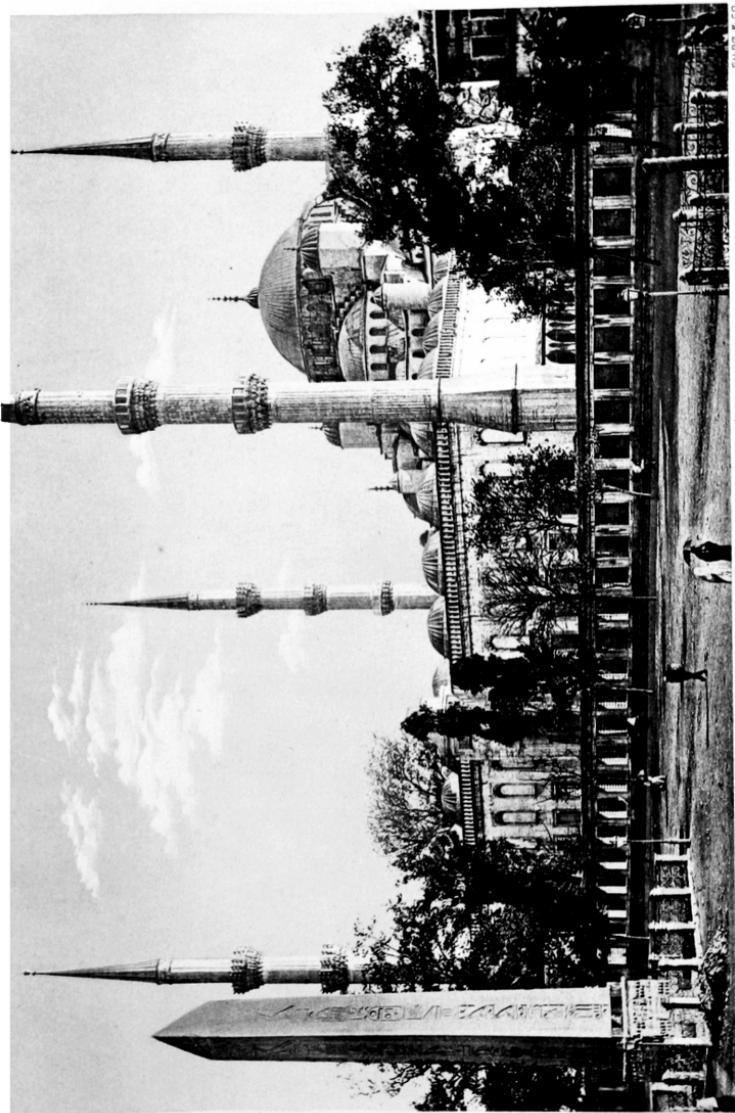




IN THE PALACES OF  
THE SULTAN







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*Mosque of Sultan Ahmed — Egyptian Obelisk and  
Serpent Column*



# IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN

BY

ANNA BOWMAN DODD

AUTHOR OF "THREE NORMANDY INNS,"  
"CATHEDRAL DAYS," ETC.



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To His Excellency  
GENERAL HORACE PORTER  
AND TO  
THE MEMORY OF MRS. PORTER



## P R E F A C E

**I**N my previous attempts to transcribe impressions of English and French people and places there were no difficulties to surmount such as have presented themselves in the present volume. There were no barriers of language in either the country of our mother tongue, or in the land in which the larger part of my childhood was passed. In Turkey there was not only an unknown tongue barring my way to a better, truer insight into the life of its people, there were also those limitations inseparable from observations confined to a few months of travel.

If to the very unusual opportunities presented by the honour accorded us of being of our Ambassador's party were due the greatly prized privileges of being received at Yildiz Court, as well as His Majesty the Sultan's gracious permission to transcribe my impressions of our reception, these exceptional advantages and favours necessarily brought in their train many restrictions.

For such observations and impressions as are recorded in the "Notes and Impressions" I must beg

## P R E F A C E

to be allowed to assume full and entire responsibility. It was after the departure of our Ambassador and Mrs. Porter from Constantinople,—after the whirl of court and diplomatic gaieties was ended,—that I was enabled to make a closer study of the life and people of that most interesting city.

For innumerable facts to support and to illustrate certain of my own views I am immeasurably indebted, not only to all of the better known authorities on Turkey and Turkish history, but particularly to “Women of Turkey” by Miss Garnett and Mr. Stuart-Glennie, to “Justinian et La Civilization Byzantine” by Charles Diéhl, to “L’Histoire d’Islam,” Bruxelles, 1897, and to Mr. Baker’s “Turkey in Europe.”

ANNA BOWMAN DODD.

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# IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN

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## Chapter I WITHIN THE GATES

A TOWERING mass of wall flanked by grey bastions, a stretch of beach on whose amber sands lay a dozen or more gaily painted caïques, and a veiled shape pink from head covering to skirt edge, shuffling waterwards in canary-coloured slippers,—such were the signs, pregnant in meaning, that announced to the passengers of the Orient express they had come to their long journey's end. We were at the gates of Stamboul.

The walls and gates Constantine had built were quickly passed. The hills beyond—warm and amber-toned as the cheek of a Turkish bride—were lost in the blur of thickly built streets. One last final spurt of speed, and we were swept beneath the iron roof of the Stamboul railway station.

White, brown, dusky-hued were the faces that looked eagerly, questioningly into our own. The cry “Excellency!” “Excéllène!” came quick and soft from upturned lips. The next instant the little group had moved, as one man, upon the carriage step of our compartment.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

The first to welcome our ambassador to France, General Horace Porter, on this his unofficial visit to the Sultan's city, was the young chargé-d'affaires of the American Legation at Constantinople. The pale blue eyes, athletic figure, and the Western energy conveyed through the speech and gesture of our first secretary, presented an interesting contrast to the intellectual melancholy stamped upon the subtle Italian countenance of the American Legation's accomplished official interpreter. Behind these two gentlemen the mobile Greek face of our future guide, and the sombre eyes and glittering uniform of the kavass, lit up the smoky corridor with a touch of Eastern colour.

It was on the kavass the eye fell and lingered. He was the embodiment of that which we had travelled a thousand miles to see. From his swarthy brow to his swift and willing feet, he was the true Oriental. His eyes, of a liquid brown, had the Moslem outlook upon life and men—a great patience streamed forth from their bronze depths. His manners were of the gentlest; yet he was, so to speak, most agreeably armed to the very teeth. Besides his sword there gleamed at his belt a waist ornament chiefly associated with those Riders we have christened Rough and with their Western brothers, the reckless, devil-may-care cow-boys. A pistol, the size of which was a warrant of its usefulness for quick handling, was worn at the belt, in a richly chased holster. What further weapons the kavass may have had concealed about the privacy of side pockets, I know not. One made responsible for the lives and persons

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confided to his care, whose own life is forfeit should harm befall them, had taken, presumably, all the necessary precautions.

The kavass's salute had riveted the eye. Once again, on this, the threshold of our Eastern experiences, it was the humble official who proffered us the looked-for Eastern salutation.

“I prostrate myself before your mightiness—I lay myself in the dust at your feet—I carry the dust to my heart, to my lips, and to my forehead. All I have is yours.” This, the deep bow—to the level of the glittering waist-belt—and the flight of the supple Eastern fingers from lips to forehead, had quickly, courteously signalled. Having thus salaamed, being a man of action, the kavass promptly proceeded to take possession of our hand-luggage.

A moment later and we had passed beyond the yellow dimness of the station. We stood on the doorstep of Stamboul.

The first outlook was amazing, bewildering, astounding. Could this indeed be Stamboul, old Byzantium, the splendid city of the Roman Emperors, the capital of the Padishahs, of Sultans whose state and magnificence had equalled if they had not surpassed, in their regal extravagance of mosque and palace building, the splendour of this city of the Eastern Cæsars?

Constantinople, Byzantium, Seraglio Point!—surely each of these words holds, within their syllabled grace, the secret, to Western ears, of an enduring, immeasurable fascination. From the moment when

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as children, to each of us in turn have been opened the magical pages of the "Thousand and One Nights," — pages that have spirited us away into that enchanted country where Scheherazade holds her perpetual sway, to the soberer time when history has conjured up for us the scarcely less fabulously beautiful city captured by the "terrible Turk," — there is no time or season in the life of the reasonable yet excitable, of the practical yet imaginative American when the great Eastern city does not rise above all others as fairest, as rarest, — the dream-city come true.

The noise that filled the streets of the "dream-city" brought a rude awakening. Cries, yells, screams, yelping dogs, the harsh crunching of bullock carts over loose-jointed stones, shouts from cab-drivers to the sea of foot-passengers filling the narrow streets, answering groans from the tightly wedged mass of pedestrians, — this was the first impression. The second was no less disillusioning. Stamboul was in the last stages of decay. Of that fact there could be no doubt whatsoever. Stained, defiled, decrepit, the low, wooden, unpainted houses seemed on the verge of a hopeless ruin. Those houses that stood fairly upright, whose doors fitted, whose upper windows, latticed, announced the looked-for haremluk seclusion, — these appeared as palaces among hovels.

Beneath the rows of these toppling buildings innumerable were the open shops, the tented booths, and the portable shops of street venders that lined the pavements. Beneath certain of these tents, from huge

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hooks, hung the severed carcasses of kids, hares, and steers,—thick as peas within their pod. About these open-air butcher's shops groups of buyers clustered close, fingering the meats, testing their freshness as they might that of perfumed flowers. Live goats, turkeys, and a stray kid or two wandered in and out



*A Butcher's Shop in Stamboul*

about the myriad-coloured *feridjehs* of the women slave-buyers and the men's baggy trousers, as freely as upon a village common. This part of the ancient city had, indeed, the air of a village; it had neither the life nor the character of a great city. Squalor, filth, and a suburban indefiniteness of outline,—such were the aspects presented by this, the back-door of Stamboul.

Gradually, insensibly, squalor and the poverty of things and houses were left behind. As over the

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rough, ill-paved streets our carriages were tossed, were jolted — now riven in a deep crevasse of mud, now tip-tilted to the verge of imminent upsetting, a fairer, finer city lined our way. Streets converged upon squares. Nobler house façades rose up, and mysteriously, hermetically latticed windows.

At a certain street-corner a group of horsemen had come to a standstill about a fairy-like structure. The marble walls of this building were rose-green-blue. Niches were carved into interlacing arabesques, fine as priceless lace. Into the great, deep basin, — yellow as topaz — the small, clean-eared Arabian horses had plunged their heads ; one could hear their lusty lapping of the water. In their brilliant Anatolian costumes, with their swarthy faces rising above the rich blues and the gold braiding, these horsemen had the haughty, arrogant look of tribal kings. To complete the picture, a garden close by, as crowded with tombs (*türbehs*) as with trees, had swept the fountain eaves with the offshoots of its green bloom. This was the East at last ! the true East, with its colour and its sharp contrasts, with its splendours set in a frame of ruins.

The streets through which we were presently swept were filled with as strange and wonderful a world of men. The faces of these men were the faces of brown men, of white men, of black men. No two faces seemed to belong to the same race ; and no one garb or costume appeared to have been the model chosen for repetition. The colours draping the crowd of men that closed in about our carriage wheels like an engulfing tide, were colours such as the Western eye chiefly asso-

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

ciates with the iridescence of bird plumage. Yet the vivid greens, the deep blues, the crimsons, pinks, and



*The Fountain of Sultan Ahmed*

yellows, melted and fused as only the vats of the Orient yield the secret of such blending. Some of

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

men in among the swarm of walkers, strollers, wanderers, were seen to be more richly clad than others. Yet the very poorest wore princely colours.

Eddies of these men were gathered about the open booths. Thinner streams were seen entering tiny shops. Coiled on low divans, close to open windows, with the tube of the *narghilé* in their thick lips, rows of Turks eyed us as we did them, curiously, inquiringly — with, however, far more languor in their semi-indifferent glance.

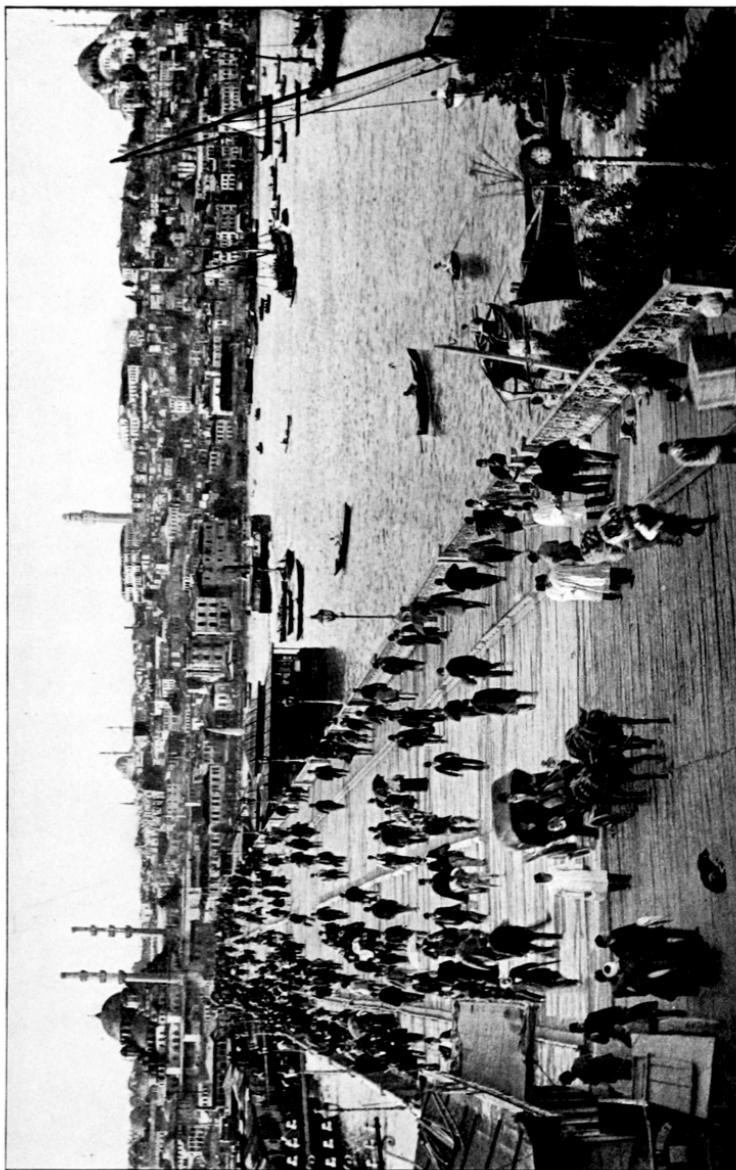
Suddenly this tide of men thickened about a wide open space. There flashed upon the sight bright, sun-flooded waters, quiveringly alive with river-craft, with moving ships, and with the white sheets of spread canvas. Beyond the bridge lay a long, thickly built shore line. And above the crowded shores there rose a white and shining city.

The breath then came quick and short. For as our wheels swept the rude planks of the bridge, the reality of that splendour we call Constantinople lay before us.

The squalid streets, the filth of the dim alleyways of Stamboul were forgotten, were as if they had never been. The glory and the beauty before us filled eyes and sense, obliterating all else, as they also dimmed the very memory of other sights and cities.

Three cities, each dazzling to the eye in its sunlit, high-noon radiance, were seen to sweep downwards from low heights, to the level of blue-tinted, craft-crowded waters.

Below the bridge, at our left, there curved the blue stem of the Golden Horn. Densely thick was the



*New Bridge Valideh Sultan Keuprisi*



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depth of colour upon the famous stream ; the darting caiques seemed rather cutting their way through some solid substance than afloat in moving waters.

Two cities came to their finish upon the blue wonder. The one facing us was a wide-waisted city. Its pink, white, and cream-faced houses rose tier upon tier to centre about a tower whose yellow surface proclaimed it to be the famous Genoese "Christ's Tower." To the right this City of Pera widened to untraceable distance. Its shore line carried the eye on and on, to the glistening whites of the royal palaces upon the Bosphorus.

At the point where the Bosphorus turned to lose its sparkling colours in a misty sea,—the Sea of Marmora,—still another city rose, shimmering and glittering, across the water-worlds. This was Scutari. The "Golden City" upon its Asian shores, that had charmed the eyes of Justinian, was golden still at this brilliant moment of high noon. Queen or beggar, Scutari still could lift its shield to the sun, that his lance might strike its antique surface into that shiver of sparkling light that made its mosques and minarets seem unreal, fantastic,—a city of wondrous outlines in luminous mosaic against the Eastern sky.

It was behind, rather than before our eyes, that, patterned in splendour, lay the city of all these cities.

Above the squalor and filth of its streets, Stamboul, upon its seven hills, stood forth amazing, stupendous, triumphant. In terraces and gardens it began its ascent from the low shores fringing the fabled Seraglio Point. Bulb-shaped kiosks rose from among plane-

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

trees and cypresses to cluster about the monster dome of Santa Sophia. Along the crest of the hills stately minarets leaped skyward, their silvery marbles ethereally translucent in the glow of the noon sun. Mosque after mosque took up the lines of curving beauty. Minaret followed minaret like living shapes abroad upon the crested slope.

Far out along the hills the silvery spirals proceeded, as in line of processional march. The eye followed, in enchanted obedience, till the blues of the glittering Horn were lost in the green depths we knew later to be the cypresses of Eyoub.

Out upon the great bridge, as below it,—in caïques, in Maltese boats, in lateen-rigged yawls, in feluccas,—as if to present themselves, grouped and in costume, were the many men of the many races, of the many creeds, of the many colours, that made the beating pulse of these three wondrous cities.

The dervish in his brown mantle and his sugar-coned hat; the gaudily garbed Croatian, with his flowing blue sleeves, and his gold-embroidered trousers and jackets; the Greek priest, stately, imposing, majestic in his trailing black robe, tall hat, and with the gossamer of his woman's veil held in the crook of his bent elbow; the Jew in his gaberdine; the bent shapes of the Khurdish porters; myriads of shapeless women figures in their all-enveloping *feridjehs*; negresses, veiled and unveiled; gypsies in gossamer vests, loose, baggy trousers, and superbly embroidered jackets, with a rose in among their oily tresses,—these, together with hundreds upon hundreds of hurrying

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shapes wearing the more universal, latter-day Turkish dress — trousers, side-spring boots, coloured vest, and the scarlet fez — such was the motley world crowding “The Bridge of All Nations.”

Out from this living throng, up through the thickly built Galata streets, up to the Pera heights, we were swept with remorseless swiftness. There was a great cracking of whips, a final scrunching of the carriage wheels, and before us stood a waiting, expectant group. We were come to the door of our Pera Hotel.

## Chapter II

### THE MESSENGERS FROM THE PALACE

THAT the Sultan was disposed to tender to General Porter an altogether exceptionally friendly welcome, was soon made manifest.

Munir Bey, the Turkish ambassador to France, had been among the first to greet his distinguished colleague on his arrival in Constantinople.

It was as envoy from the palace — as His Majesty's chosen messenger — that Munir Bey presented himself on the occasion of his second visit. He was the bearer of several most gracious messages. His Majesty, he made known, was desirous of receiving His Excellency, and at the earliest possible moment. On the Moslem Sunday — on Friday — directly after the Selamlik, the religious ceremonial of His Majesty's going to mosque, — this had been the hour and time chosen by Sultans for several years to grant audiences to distinguished visitors or to resident ambassadors. Sultan Abdul Hamid II had continued this time-honoured custom.

On the coming Friday, therefore, His Excellency smilingly announced, "His Imperial Majesty" would be pleased to "receive" General Porter; while to



*Galata Tower and Step Street—Pera*





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view the ceremony of the Selamlik, His Majesty would also “be pleased” to have as his guests in the palace, in the diplomats’ reception-room, our ambassador and ambassadress, as well as their two friends.

The royal palaces upon the Bosphorus and the imperial treasury at Seraglio Point were to be opened for our inspection. His Majesty also placed at our ambassador’s disposal the royal carriages and caïques.

A further distinguishing proof of the Sultan’s courtesy was Munir Bey’s last and final announcement. Mustafa Hilmi Bey, Captain in His Majesty’s Navy, now serving as aide-de-camp on His Majesty’s staff, had been appointed as escort to the person of General Porter during his sojourn on Turkish soil.

The royal message once delivered, the talk turned, with the brief interchange of question and answer, upon the person and character of the Sultan himself.

His Majesty, it appears, is the simplest as well as the most gracious of sovereigns. He is also one of the hardest worked among modern rulers, giving indeed all his time and thought to “affairs.” He rarely or never came into the city. His weekly drive from his palace to Hamidieh Mosque—a two minutes’ drive from his palace gates to the mosque he had built close to the walls of Yildiz—was his sole public appearance, save two. On the occasions of the two great religious ceremonies,—the Kissing of the Prophet’s Mantle at Seraglio Point, and the *Baisemains*, held at the Palace of Dolma Baghcheh at Baïram, the Moslem Easter—for these two sacred festivals the

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Sultan passes beyond the walls and Palace of Yildiz. The remainder of the year and the whole of his life—of his busy, administrative, toilful life—is wholly passed within the palaces and grounds of the “Star Kiosk.”

Such were the interesting if somewhat scanty details vouchsafed our eager ears, from the lips of one of the Sultan’s most trusted and well-beloved subjects and servants.

The conversation, almost immediately, was then tactfully turned into channels less personal.

Nothing strikes the Western mind more forcibly than this reticent discretion and tactful avoidance of the most interesting of all subjects and topics in Turkey—the Sultan. The “Hamidian Methods,” as his enemies phrase the Sultan’s system of government touching the more intimate lives of his subjects, may have had their inevitable effect in making prudence and caution second nature. But there is a religious base beneath the autocratic system peculiar to the reign of Abdul Hamid II which alone can account, to the Western, more irreverent mind, for the attitude maintained by Turks toward their ruler.

In our Western world the Sultan’s acts and doings,—the innermost secrets of his life within his Palace of Yildiz, his imperial failings and shortcomings, as well as a full and complete understanding of the intimate springs moving both his home and foreign policy,—each and all of these topics form the staple of diurnal journalist treatment. There is no European writer so poor in fancy that he is found unequal to

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the telling of a Thousand and One Tales concerning one of the cleverest and most astute of living rulers. It is also equally true that once within the Sultan's realm this somewhat unreal, fictional figure vanishes, like the mirage upon the sandy seas of the desert, into nothingness.

Out of the vague and nebulous East arises a still more mythical figure. In the land of Mahomet, this his Khalifa, the Padishah, the Son of the Faithful, Shadow of God, king, ruler, father of his people, earthly representative of God's holy prophet;—this mighty being is still hedged about with much of that divinity that, from the Eastern standpoint, should screen a king.

The Oriental is among the last of the great worshippers. The soul of the true Turk is still the soul of the believer. Five times a day he prostrates himself before his Lord God; his King is the shadow of his Maker in the flesh. To discuss, to question the doings or the commands of either God, Prophet, or King is accounted sacrilege. That which is a cult among the common Moslem people, is still the creed of good taste, immutably fixed in the world of convention, among the courtiers of the palace and the members of the old Turkish party.

The talk on that brilliant October afternoon touched on themes fraught with no dangerous potentialities. Diplomats, I have noticed, are masters in the art of skilfully guiding their discourses in and out and away from dangerous eddies. The theory, indeed, that diplomats, in their idlest conversational moments,

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are busily weaving elaborate webs wherein to entrap the brightest chosen minds of Europe, to their own future discomfiture and to their country's hurt,— what popular theory is at once more wide-spread or more absurdly improbable?

Into what a tangle, for example, would the two



*The French Quais in Pera*

accomplished ambassadors sitting in the sunlit Pera Hotel drawing-room have contrived to twist their mutual personal and professional relations had certain strictly professional topics been indiscreetly touched upon?

The diplomatic relations between Turkey and France, at the moment of our descent upon Constantinople, might best have been characterised by nega-

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tion. Monsieur Constant, a few weeks before our descent upon the Sultan's city, for reasons all the world was to know later on, had acted upon his conviction that it was in Paris rather than from a near proximity to the Sublime Porte that the interests of France in Turkey could best be furthered. His charming colleague, Munir Bey, in his turn, had found on the shores of the Bosphorus the most delectable of residences in which to pass the somewhat indeterminate length of his own "leave."

The situation between America and the northern boundaries of Turkey were of a like critical complexion.

On the person of Miss Ellen Stone, the American missionary, the eyes of both the diplomatic and religious worlds in America and Turkey, as well as those in the Bulgarian capital, had been focussed for some weeks. That lady's wandering away from Sophia, the windy city in the plains, into the savage-looking country we ourselves had but recently passed, the last in the world to have been chosen for the engendering of an agreeable feeling of security, as we had all agreed, — this lady's recent capture, in high brigandish fashion, was the "burning" question upon our own particular square of the diplomatic chess-board.

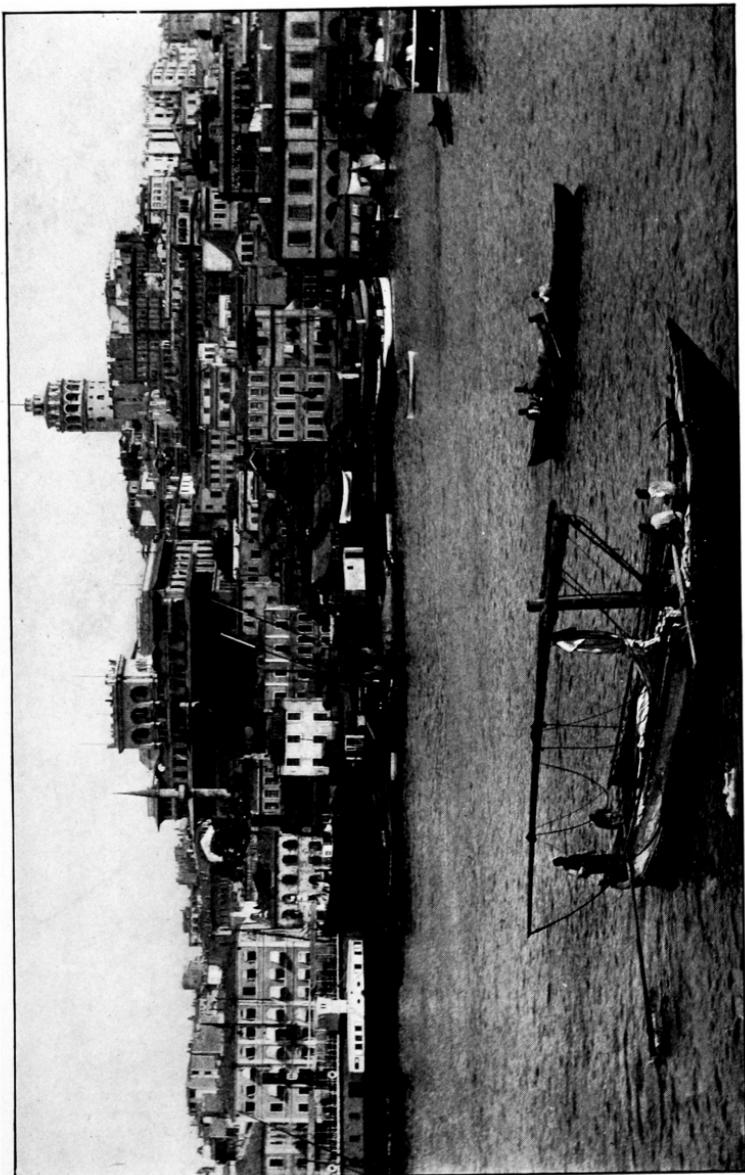
Yet think you it was in the making of any such grave moves, or the touching on such delicate matters of state, wise and witty diplomats talk when they meet? The brightly lighted, flower-scented drawing-room resounded to gayer notes, to reminiscent echoes of London, Viennese, St. Petersburg, and Parisian gaieties.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

The golden afternoon light that flooded the drawing-room had caught the expressive American face of General Porter in its happiest, most genial aspect. The amber light suffused the face, as it did the room, with a broad sweep of colour. The firmly muscled features, with their accent of concentrated earnestness, were harmonised and softened. The style and distinction of General Porter's face and figure in any place or pose are noticeable and impressive. The erect, soldierly poise is one never lost, whether in the saddle or in the drawing-room. The gestures are those of the trained orator — few but expressive.

As the talk had warmed, the ripple of a quiet inward laughter had turned the steel of the general's determined eyes into bluish tints. The wit and humourist in this many-sided man of action, man of affairs, soldier, diplomat, and orator had asserted their natural, irresistible rights, as the conversation had winged its way into the regions where epigram and neat rejoinder played the part of glancing shuttle in and out of graver themes.

— Munir Bey's conversational touch was as light and sure. On the subtle Eastern base, the Parisian superstructure defined itself with definite, graceful charm. The Turkish ambassador presented, indeed, rather the European than the typically Turkish physical aspect. Of medium size, slight, alert, Munir Bey's vivacity, both of speech and gesture, proved the plastic nature of the true Cosmopolitan. His earlier training for his high post as representative of the Sublime Porte to France, had been, however, of an essentially Eastern



*Pera and Galata Docks*



## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

character. The Sultan had seen in him, in the earlier years of his training as courtier in the palace, the promise of those traits and distinguishing qualities which, later, were to place Munir Bey in the highest rank of the diplomatic service.

It was with the metallic clink of a sword, in the sober yet rich uniform of the Turkish navy, that the next messenger from the palace presented himself.

Though somewhat short of stature, Mustafa Bey's bearing was eminently soldierly. The large, finely moulded features were distinctly Oriental. The eyes were serious, brown, and liquid; they moved beneath almond-shaped lids. What the brow was like, one must rather divine than know. In all the weeks of our meeting no such disaster as to be caught uncapped by his fez was a possible mishap to so adroit a master of circumstance as was the Sultan's aide-de-camp.

In the intervals of his duty at the palace, Mustafa Bey has devoted his time to the study of modern languages. He has also kept in touch with the intellectual, literary, and scientific progress in Europe and America. His English, first learned in the Turkish schools in Constantinople, had been perfected by years of patient study and practice.

Those self-complacent Anglo-Saxons, Germans, or Frenchmen who, pityingly, would generously wield the schoolmaster's rule or ferule for the "enlightenment" of Turks and Turkey, in the meeting of such men as the Mustafa Beys would receive a rude shock to their egoism. The "Young Turkey" party are supposed to have absorbed all the intellect and culture

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

among the more modernised Turks. It is rather in such strong men as the present Grand Vizier, Saïd Pasha, and of the more obscure but equally progressive Mustafa Hilmi Beys that the true hope and promise of Turkish development lie.

A singular clarity of mental outlook upon the irresistible encroachments of European advancement, in the domain of thought and science, has been maintained by the more enlightened Turks. The preservation of certain inrooted Moslem traditions, and at least an outward observance of a creed, founded on the religious base of a devout, superstitious people has, perhaps, greatly helped towards the support of this intellectual poise.

The soul of a nation, as also that soul which may be said to animate both armies and machines, lies in its dormant strength. The more silently the work of enlightenment goes on, the more pervasive will be its influence. The wordy, bitter, impatient revolutionists would precipitate tragedies in government, they must ask a Napoleon to resolve into order. One cannot be a month in Turkey without the conviction being well in-riveted that a Grand Vizier of the Saïd Pasha type, and subjects modelled after the mind and patient intellectual outlook of Mustafa Hilmi Bey, are rulers and subjects safest alike for Sultans and for the people of Turkey.

There was still another figure prominent in the group that centred about our ambassador. The position of official dragoman in any Eastern legation or embassy is one demanding a combination of

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

qualities as rare as they are, as a rule, taken for granted. All the secrets of the diplomatic relations between the various countries, as well as the two between whom the linguistic accomplishment of the interpreter serves as the sole method of communication, such are the familiars of dragomen. In all Eastern countries the corridors of palaces, as well as the ante-chambers of ministers, are whispering galleries where rumour is as prolific as spies are omnipresent. In and out of galleries and ante-chambers the dragoman moves, as charged with facts as are the ignorant with falsehoods. Yet must his lips be as the stone sealing a tomb. The dragoman must, in a word, be as discreet as a Jesuit, as wise as the unpleasant but astute serpent, clever and subtle enough to supply any needed mental material in an emergency, should his chief be found in want of efficient aid; while, added to these above-named qualities and gifts, the dragoman should be possessed of the self-obliterating capacity of a woman or of a devotee.

The position of official dragoman is in no sense inferior or subordinate. Mr. G——'s diplomatic rank is that of third secretary. For thirty years his place has been as that of a fixed star in the sphere of the Turko-American diplomatic world. He has seen His Majesty come to the throne a young man, to be young still, in point of intellectual grasp and power, after his six and twenty years' reign, and in spite of his sixty years of life. For that the intellect is the best of cosmetics is proved anew by Abdul Hamid II.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

The American Presidents under whose rule Mr. G—— has served, whose Ministers have as a rule succeeded each other with the regularity of their own election to their high office, began with General Grant. What changes, crises, dangers, wars, and international wranglings have gone to the making of these thirty years of history! In the very latest of these international episodes, Mr. G—— has played an important part. At this moment of writing, our clever and accomplished dragoman is on his appointed mission for the ransoming and recapture of Miss Stone. As this wary gentleman moves in the company of the American consul, in the midst of the mounted guard detailed as their escort, along the rugged slopes of the Bulgarian mountains, the secrets of Miss Stone's captivity, as well as her ransom, will be carried as Mr. G—— has carried, for over a quarter of a century, innumerable state secrets. He will bring to his task the reserve of the Jesuit, the wisdom of a philosopher, and the self-obliteration of the ideal dragoman.

## Chapter III

### THE SELAMLIK — FROM THE PALACE OF YILDIZ KIOSK

THE ceremony of the Selamlik, we were to find, was an early one. At precisely high-noon the Sultan leaves his palace for his two minutes' drive to the Hamidieh Mosque. The setting of the great scene of the religious ceremonial, however, begins some hours before midday.

Quite early in the morning, the tramp of soldiers came up through the open windows. Companies of marines were filling the streets, on their way from the Admiralty to the palace heights. The exhilarating crash of military music followed,—its measure quick and brisk. The rhythmic fall of hundreds of feet in tune was as an accompaniment to the more sonorous "Sultan's March." One felt the quickened stir of life abroad upon the streets. The moving regiments, the crash and din of street traffic congested into narrow spaces, the rustle of restive crowds,—such were the sounds that were swept upward through the open casements.

Our own start for the palace was both early and animated. Mustafa Bey's sword clicked across the

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

corridor with an unusual energy. The chargé-d'affaires and Mr. G——, the third secretary and official dragoman, were announced at an unwontedly matutinal hour, as it seemed to us. The kavass, in his scarcely disguised ardour of executive zeal, seemed multiplied into a dozen of his order, his appearances, disappearances, and re-appearances being effected with such amazing celerity.

Once out upon the Grande Rue, the fact of a strict keeping of the Moslem Sunday was quickly borne in upon us. The shops were, for the most part, closed. The shriek of venders was unheard. Yet there was noise, and plenty of it, although it was neither the din of yelling street pedlers, nor was it the rush and roar of traffic that filled the thoroughfare. A living stream of mounted horsemen, of stately broughams, of wide, open victorias, pressing toward the common centre of La Grande Rue, issued from side streets, from Le Petit Champs des Morts, and from every Pera thoroughfare. More and more troops swept up from the arsenal and other barracks. Mounted aides dashed in and out of the carriages, of the street carts, and of the moving regiments.

Colour, motion, sound, these filled the Pera streets. Ministers and high officials were seen to be in semi-full dress. Their court-uniforms, though ablaze with gold embroidery, were not as gorgeous as those in which, later on, we were to see them. One must not go into the presence of God in costly raiment, says the Koran.

The soberer uniforms of the soldiers made a rising



23. Croates.

*Croatians and Albanians*



## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

and falling line of grey-blue below the sun-splashed houses. The early noon light beat out more and more colour from the gold-and-silver threaded officers' breasts, from the thousands and thousands of the scarlet fezes (in the distance these were bright as poppy fields drenched in sunshine), and from the gay, motley hued house-fronts. Never had the Eastern autumnal light been clearer, brighter, more richly luminous; never before had it seemed to possess such a miraculous quality of blending, fusing, transforming every object, tint, and creature into ravishing, harmonious beauty.

Yet, it would never have been the East, and assuredly not Constantinople, had not our progress onwards up to the Sultan's palace been one starred with sharp contrasts.

At a sudden upward rise in the thoroughfare, a cemetery on one side, and a huge, ungainly structure on the other, — before whose walls and portals there flashed the Prussian eagles from Prussian helmets, — these announced the German embassy winter palace overlooking a magnificent outlook over the Bosphorus, Scutari, the Asiatic shore, and Le Grand Champs des Morts.

For a certain distance, the long high walls of the palace of Dolma Baghcheh lined the dusty streets. Through their splendid portals glimpses of the palms and brilliant garden-beds within the gates shone like fairy realms. Sentry-boxes and saluting sentinels were hereabouts as thick, and thicker, than were the tree-trunks along the thoroughfare.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

From embassies and palatial royal gardens we were precipitated suddenly, with characteristic Eastern brusqueness, into a wretched, squalid village. The village lay at the foot of two hills. Both are palace-



*A Street Scene in Orta Keui*

crowned. But Orta Keui has remained immovable and unalterable ; its Asiatic ways and customs are unchanged alike by the coming of German ambassadors or by the building of palace after palace by its own Sultan. Its shops, houses, streets, were the shops, the houses, and streets of remote antiquity.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

In wretched cafés, upon rotting divans, lay the coiled shapes of Turks. Already, at eleven in the morning, they were seeking the comforting anaesthetic of the *narghilé*. Squads of mangy dogs eyed, indolently, the marching squads of the trim soldiers. Groups of Khurds and Persians with their bullock carts and



*A Wing of Yildiz Kiosk*

strings of pack mules, moved toward the side walls, to let the train of the ministers go by.

Two Arab horsemen whose open breasts were like bronze shields in the same sun that was beating into a shimmer of light the silver helmets of a regiment of lancers,— these were watering their steeds at a corner fountain.

From the antique pool of this village filth we were

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

swept upward to the heights of Yildiz Kiosk. The air freshened sensibly. Well-kept strips of lawn and finely foliaged trees lined the broad road-way filled with troops, with stately victorias, and with mounted cavaliers.

The white marble façade of a glistening structure topped the hill-slope. This, we were told, was the western wing of the palace. As we swept across an open space, upon which companies of troops were already in line, there came the click and rustle of hundreds of muskets quickly handled. The salute was a masterly proof of perfection of drill.

The royal carriages came to a stop at a wrought-iron garden-gate. Beyond the gate a tiny square of garden plot was thick with tropical palms and strange-leaved plants.

Mustafa Bey, as he held out his gloved hand, was heard to say, "We are to go by the garden, through the gate, into the palace." As he led us onward, through the cool greens, the aide-de-camp; as well as the diplomats forming our ambassador's cortège, showed, by the accession of a certain tense energy in their bearing and their smiles, that this passing into the precincts of the palace, through this private way, was an unusual, an especial honour.

Directly before the palace wing, a projecting pavilion, known as the diplomats' reception-room in the palace, confronted us. Up the short flight of steps leading to this pavilion we were led.

That this room was splendidly lighted, that was the first impression. That it was aglow with rich and

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

contrasting colours, was the second. The crimsons of satin-hung walls set forth the brighter reds of the gold and brocade-upholstered great sofas, divans, and deep-seated chairs. The palace attendants flashed the more vivid scarlets of their richly embroidered coats, in their swift and noiseless service. Once they had divested the little company of their wraps, the great doors leading into the palace ante-chamber were noiselessly closed. We were left to take possession of the brilliant sun-flooded room. We were also left to wait.

The subsequent half hour or more of waiting was, perhaps, as interesting a period, save one, as any in the splendid ceremony of the Selamlik. Through any one of the four windows there was such a prospect before our eyes as Europe can scarcely hope to outrival.

In the foreground of the great outlook a snowy marble mosque, ribboned with carvings, carried upward its light dome and lighter lace-worked minaret. To the right a garden, green, and larger than the one we had traversed, was set against the sky-spaces. Beyond the sword-leaved cacti and the palm fringes, for miles upon miles, like a green and moving meadow, ran the water stretches of the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora. Between the sea and the blue vault there swam the misty outlines, astonishingly clear at certain points, dim and nebulous at others, of Seraglio Point, of Stamboul, and the paling line of the Asiatic hills.

Under the magical Eastern sunlight the great prospect glittered and shimmered. It was surely some

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

celestial region, suddenly revealed to mortal eye,—this fair and wondrous spectacle of great cities set upon the glistening water spaces, rimmed about with their great frame of mountains. The beauty and splendour of the outlook thrilled the frame; one felt the breath held; for very rapture one could hardly breathe.

Immediately beneath our windows the scene of the brilliant military pageant was presently seen to be entirely set. Thousands upon thousands of troops were in line. Their arms were at rest. Far as the eye could reach it was carried onward by the lines of massed blues, of reds, of whites; by the sun-sparkle rippling upon officers' gold or silver embroidered caps and breasts; it was carried on and onward to distant hill-tops, where the high-held pennants of the companies of mounted lancers dulled the livid greens. /

Through the open windows, the impatient chastening of stone pavements by hundreds of iron hoofs, the murmurous rustle of masses of men fingering swords and muskets, the sharp crunching of the wheels of some belated Pasha's viktoria, the rhythmic beat of soldiers marching into position, and the rattling thud of their ground arms,—such were, the sounds that came up to us, confused yet softened, that were full of a nervous, stimulating excitement.

Such is the spectacle, and such the scene that, week after week, year after year, is spread before the eyes of ministers, of ambassadors, of the diplomats of living, thinking, calculating, intriguing, modern Europe. Like unto those shields mediæval warriors

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

danced before the eyes of their enemies,—shields whereon the chisel of a Cellini had carved fair cities and strong towers set above moving waters, with ramparts and citadels filled with armed warriors,—it is like unto such a shield, but one glistening with the sheen of living waters, peopled by cities pulsating with human life, sparkling beneath a sun whose radiant splendour no silver disc could ever hope to show,—such a marvel it is that His Majesty the Sultan holds up to the envious gaze of Europe. Does the so-called “sick man” smile, at times, behind the shield, as he thinks of some of those strange discords in the Concert of the Nations which, among several other facts, enable him, alone and unaided, still to hold, with firm and resolute grasp, this fair and shining prospect as his very own.

Some of those who are supposed to find this outlook over “The Queen of Cities” and the water-gates leading from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean of peculiar interest, had already entered the room.

The Russian ambassador, Monsieur Z——, was the first among his colleagues to make his appearance at the Selamlik. The First Secretary of the Greek legation presently followed. In the course of the half hour of waiting, several other diplomats made their appearance. For any one of the members of the diplomatic corps to be seen at the windows of the diplomats’ reception-room, is accepted by the Sultan in lieu of a visit. It is, indeed, the sole chance afforded diplomats for the making of an informal official call upon His Majesty. Should the Sultan’s quick eye fail to discern a visitor, as he passes below

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the window, the presence of the visitor would be announced by the Grand Master of Ceremonies.

It is the habit of the present Sultan, after the religious ceremony at the mosque, to retire to the palace audience chamber. It is in this apartment, in close proximity to the pavilion, that those of his visitors whom His Majesty may see fit to receive, are conducted after the Selamlik.

Of late years, the Sultan has become, it is affirmed, more and more difficult of access. Foreigners particularly have been less and less acceptable as guests at Yildiz Kiosk. Even resident ambassadors encounter repeatedly, it is said, difficulties in obtaining audiences. Such foreign guests of distinction as are received, however, become the recipients of a hospitality as royal and cordial as it is rare. The visit of the German Emperor and Empress, four years ago, was the last royal visit paid by foreign sovereigns to the Sultan and his city. Their entertainment, as all the world read, was on a scale commensurate with the eventful importance of their Majesties' visit. They and their suite viewed the Selamlik from the windows of the diplomats' room, as, a week or so later, their young sailor-son and his shipmates were to be our own successors at the four deep windows.

Meanwhile, as the room had been filling, the talk became more and more animated. Some of it touched, with a delicate reserve, upon the Sultan. In all of the twenty-six years of his reign, it appeared, in winter or in summer, Abdul Hamid II had never been known once to miss the Selamlik.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

"Ill or well, he comes. If he is ill, he postpones the illness until after the ceremony," said one of the younger diplomats, with the glib wit of youth.

"But it is well known that, frail as he looks, His Majesty is really never seriously ill." And then, quite suddenly, the room was still. The conversation came to an end, for the ceremony of the Selamlik was, literally, sounding forth its first notes.

An exquisite musical cry rang out. Soaring upward, its notes filled the air. Above the murmurous confusion of the speech, the stir, and the motion of thousands of human beings, it rose aloft like the voice of a silver-tongued lark.

"It is the Muezzin, he is calling to prayer. Do you see him, upon the parapet? He has the most beautiful voice in Constantinople."

The most beautiful voice in Constantinople held the spaces of the sky, and our ears, for all too short a time. His musical chant was soon lost in the more puissant notes of a trumpet.

On a low rise of ground, to the left, a single trumpeter stood, alone, quite close to the palace. He was announcing to the Sultan's cortège that the great moment was come.

At the sound of the clear notes, the troops, as if electrified, shouldered arms. They stood as one man, rigid as statues. In front of their companies the officers showed their erect, alert figures. There was a moment of strained, of breathless expectancy. High up against the blue, the black shape of the Muezzin was still visible. But his lark-like voice was now entirely

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

silent. The soldiers below our windows were so still, they scarcely seemed to move. Our own voices within the room were softened to a murmur.

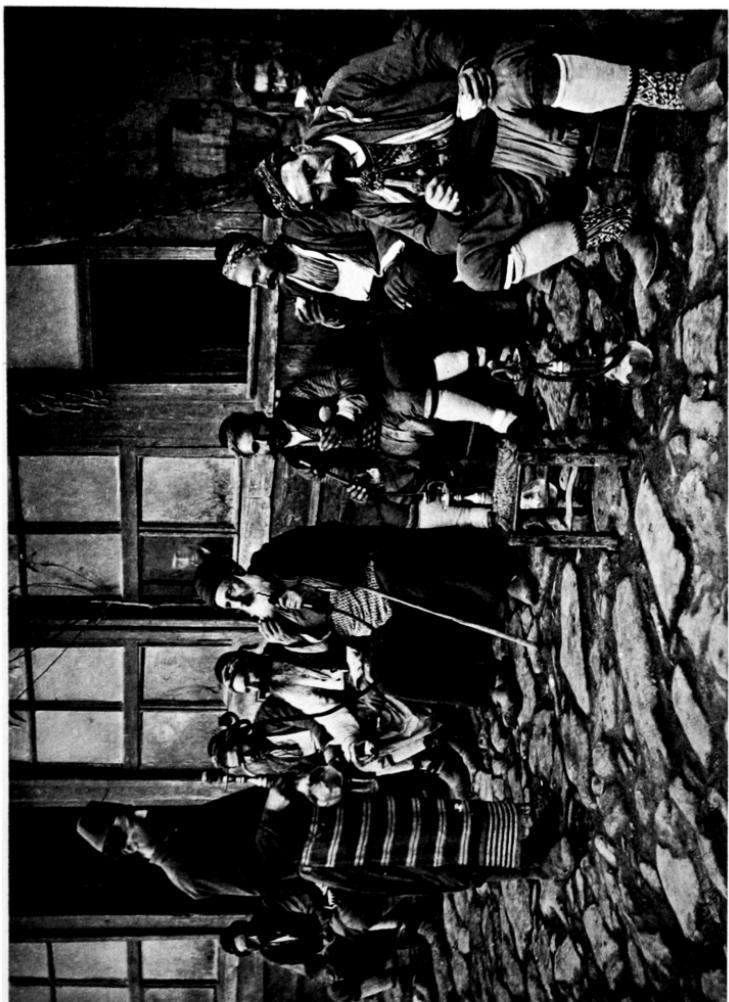
Suddenly there was a visible quiver along the line of the troops. A quick, simultaneous slanting of hundreds of eyes upward towards the hill-slope at the left and as swift a resettling into an almost inanimate rigidity, and we needed no further sign as an announcement that the procession from the palace was already in sight.

In lieu of a gorgeous military guard, as outposts to the pageant, a number of smart coupés slowly defiled down the palace slope. On either side of each of these coupés rode black men, in long black coats, fez-capped. Each was mounted on a superb Arabian steed. The faces of these men had the unmistakable look of eunuchs, the blighted look of mutilated men who were yet unnaturally shrewd and acute, both of feature and expression.

Some of the ladies of the harem were seated, two and two, within the carriages. First of all came the Valideh-Sultan, the Sultan's stepmother, the princess who has devoted her life to her adopted son, Abdul Hamid II. This princess, an old lady now, was heavily veiled. The slave beside her, her favourite slave, was costumed like unto a queen. As the carriage passed, there was a swift vision of a mass of pink satin filling the coupé enclosure. A lovely, unveiled face rose above the lace-trimmed mantle. There was a luxurious sweep of dark lids, a glimpse of a pair of superb black eyes framed in carnation tints and snow,



*A Turkish Café*





## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

and the lady and her slave, like a vision in a dream, were gone.

The princesses, the wives and the daughters of the Sultan, who followed the Valideh-Sultan, wore each the impenetrable fall of thick lace lately come into fashion. Through the dense meshes of this veil no single feature was discernible. The faces behind the veils might have been black, white, or yellow ; none among those hundreds of onlookers would ever know their colour, save those who are permitted to look upon them within their harem walls. For the more ordinary popular *feridjeh* these ladies of the palace had substituted richly trimmed Parisian opera cloaks. Within these silken mantles the secret of the shape or outline, even to the very colour of the skin of favourite wife, daughter, or Khadine, were secrets as closely guarded as though these ladies had never emerged from harem walls.

Behind the harem cortège, like an ugly monster guarding a troop of mysterious fairies, rode the Chief Eunuch. His Highness, ——, was stout, awkward, clumsy. He sat his enormous steed, a superb black Arabian stallion, with an uneasy restlessness. His unwieldy frame wobbled upon, rather than sat the gorgeously wrought saddle. The Abyssinian's face betrayed his low-caste origin. Neither his long experience at court, nor the late refining influences of his exalted position have had their effect upon the still half-savage African face. Its clever, unscrupulous expression, sufficiently explained, however, the power said to be wielded at court and within the imperial harem by this high and mighty personage.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

The group of youthful, boyish figures who followed immediately after the harem carriages, was a pleasanter sight than this huge African. The three young lads composing this group were the Sultan's younger sons. Each of the three wore an officer's uniform. They carried their swords with an easy grace. The elder of the princes, a pale, somewhat heavily moulded youth of fourteen is, it appears, the Sultan's favourite. The youngest, a little lad of seven, riveted the eyes. Alert, vivacious, bright of eye, the child had a natural dignity which, coupled with his sprightliness, made every motion or gesture significant.

The cavalry officers, the group of fine, distinguished-looking, elderly visaged officers attendant on these young princes, quickly followed after their youthful charges. The brisk step and the silver beards, the latter shining in the sun, of these officers made an interesting contrast to the extreme youth of the princes.

The mounted escort of the imperial suite next swept into line. These men and their horses made a fine effect. The eye was divided between the desire to look solely at the supple, muscular frames and at the tensely knit, bronzed faces of the soldiers, or to let the eye rest upon the glossy skinned coats of the restive, small-eared horses.

Four or five Arabian saddle-horses of purest breed, blanketed to their blinders, led by grooms, came next into view. These were the Sultan's own saddle-horses, those used by His Majesty in his rides through the great grounds and forests of Yildiz, on his said-to-be frequent hunting or shooting expeditions.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

After the horses' passing, there came a brief pause in the procession.

Presently a long, swelling cry burst forth. The cry rose and gathered in volume until the air throbbed with the thunderous roar, "Long live our Sultan!" The huzza, thrice repeated, burst from hundreds of soldier lips beneath and beyond our windows, to be carried, like a mighty wave, swelling as it passed, up to the heights of the hill-slope.

Into the midst of his acclaiming soldiers the Sultan, seated within the imperial carriage, was seen to be slowly descending from the palace gateway.

Upon the very middle of his wide-seated victoria, erect, the whole figure slightly thrust forward, the poise somewhat rigid from the sustained effort necessary to preserve a perfect equilibrium, — slow as was the pace at which the grey stallions were driven, — Abdul Hamid II was seen to present a very kingly aspect.

His Majesty's bearing, for the long minutes in which his cloak-clad figure was the focal, pivotal point of the whole of the splendid scene and pageant which framed it, was conspicuous for its impressive dignity. Alone, unaided by the trappings of state splendour in dress, or by the advantages to be gained by being seen in the saddle, as had been his own custom in former years, as well as that of all his predecessors on their public appearances, — as this solitary figure sat, immovably erect upon his great cushions, the presence of majesty having entered the scene was sensibly, instantaneously felt.

As the imperial carriage passed below the palace

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

windows, a great hush had succeeded the cheering. Every eye was riveted upon the Sultan, as every lip was stilled and silent. Into the midst of this awed silence the Sultan rode, as unmoved by the great, sudden quiet as he had been by the shouts of his soldiers. The lined, stern, somewhat forbidding face wore a mask-like impenetrability. The keen, swiftly glancing eyes were, however, seen to be sweeping the men and the scene of which he was the centre, with cool, collected, all-seeing gaze.

Seated though he was, the Sultan was seen to be short of stature. The frame beneath the loose military cloak was obviously slight. Yet that there was a store of nervous as well as muscular strength within the frame was announced by certain unmistakable signs. The lines of the figure were pronounced, accusative; the eye-glance was quick, authoritative; in the bearing of the torso, as in the poise and carriage of the head, there was the accent of an energetic determination. The beard was dyed black, according to the law of the Koran, which forbids the head of the State and its religion to show the betraying signs of age. "The Shadow of God," like the immortal gods of Greece, must be immortally young. To Western eyes the dyeing of the beard is uncomely, a hardening of the features and a deadening of the skin being its inevitable betrayal. It was later, when the Sultan's interesting physiognomy could be watched and studied at closer range, that the distinction and the peculiar *finesse* of certain of the imperial features were revealed.

As His Majesty passed below the open windows of

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the diplomats' room, he had lifted, for the briefest of seconds, his all-seeing eyes to the bowed heads above his own. The lids fell almost as soon as they were raised. Yet, so all-embracing had been their flashing glance, each one of us gravely assured the other we alone had been the sole object within the swift vision.

"His Majesty sees everything and every one. Nothing escapes him. He knows quite well, now, who each one of you are, and what you are like," smilingly murmured, close to my ear, one of the younger diplomats.

The imperial carriage had now turned within the gates of the garden enclosing the mosque. It presently came to its final stop at the steps of the temple. The darkly costumed figure of the Sultan was seen to mount the carpeted steps. The vigour of his tread was plainly discernible, as was the authoritative accent of his whole bearing.

As he had sat alone in his carriage, so alone the Sultan entered the sacred edifice. As soon as the white marbles of the glistening portal had swallowed up the slight, dark figure, His Majesty's ministers and his court followed, filling the steps and crowding the somewhat narrow mosque entrance. The rich uniforms, a continuous line of light, made an effective contrast to the striking simplicity of the monarch's own garb.

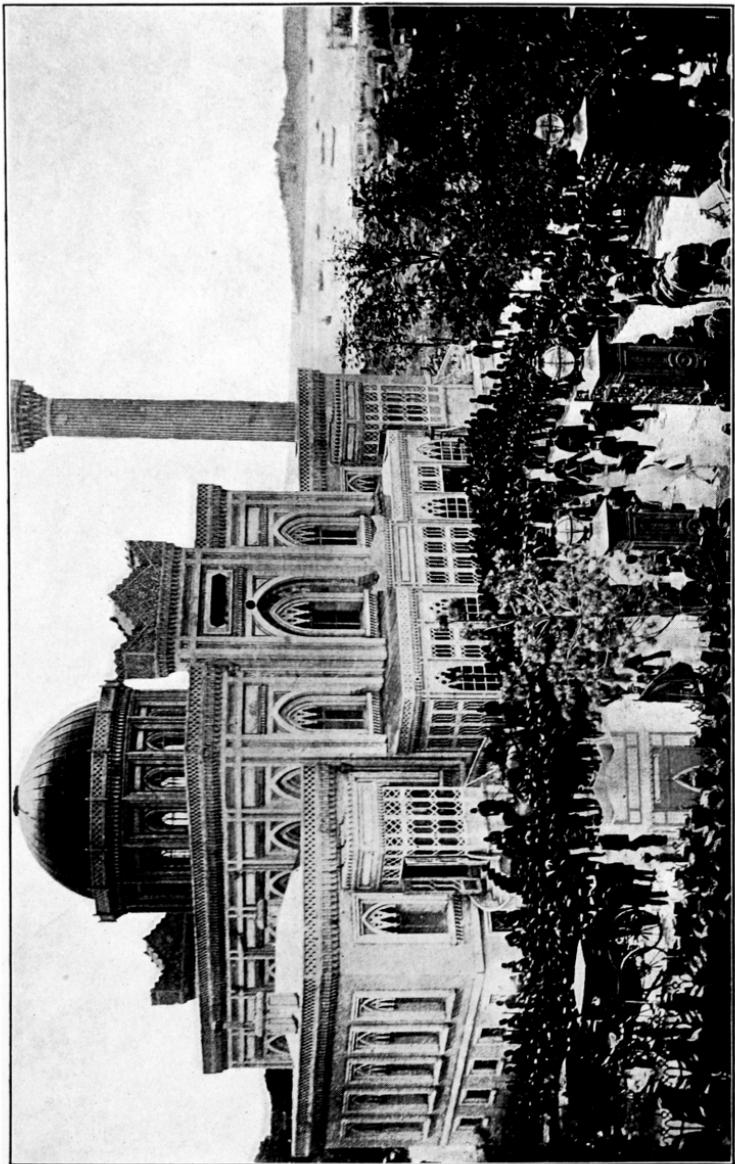
Infantry and marines, the scarlet-turbaned zouaves farther on, the lancers, as well as the cavalry, far as one could trace the flash of gold or the fluttering pennant,—all of the troops in line had, meanwhile, performed a strange manœuvre. As sunflowers turn

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

to the sun, the faces and figures of the troops, wherever massed, had moved slowly, gradually mosquewards. Yet it was not the mosque, it was their king and ruler they were thus facing. As the imperial carriage had turned to enter the sacred gates, the marines and infantry immediately below our windows had presented a side line to our own view. During the half hour of worship within the mosque, it was the backs of the men, and no longer their dark, sunburnt faces we looked upon. Every Turkish, Khurdish, Albanian, and Anatolian face thus fronted the white mosque. For it is ever the faces, and never the backs, among the thousands of his troops and the millions of his subjects, His Majesty must see.

During the half hour of waiting for the Sultan to finish his devotions, the soldiers stood thus, facing the mosque. Horses as well as men were wheeled right about face. Every aide-de-camp and courtier filling the mosque garden had his face and his horse, were he astride of one, turned towards the curving steps where the black carpet, the sacred Arabian carpet, awaited the return of the Khalifa.

The ladies of the harem, still within their coupés, were also facing the temple. They, also, were waiting. Each and every one of the horses of the several carriages had been, according to usage, unharnessed and led away. The horseless vehicles stood immobile, expectant. The eyes of the fair occupants within the carriages, presumably, were not wholly engaged in a study of the garden trees and shrubs. This weekly drive, of two minutes, from the harem of Yildiz Kiosk



*The Troops and Court facing Hamidiye Mosque*



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to the Hamidieh Mosque, is the chief, the one great outing of these fair prisoners.

Their master and ruler, who, within the white mosque, in the upper gallery sacred to the prostrations of majesty, was even then offering up his prayers to the sole Being, save Mahomet, greater than this King of Kings, this mighty being who held within his hand literally the life and death of every veiled shape within the royal vehicles, had seemed, as he had passed his stepmother, his wives, his latest favourite, as oblivious of their presence as he had shown himself sublimely unconscious of any commonest soldier among his massed troops.

The half hour of prayer and ritual composing the simple Moslem service was quickly passed.

Those of us within the palace pavilion, meanwhile, were engaged in looking out upon the wonderful scene, in watching the long lines of the backs of the troops, in having pointed out to us the various officers, ministers, and Pashas grouped within the mosque garden enclosure, prominent in office or at court, and in noting the fine effect of the splendid Eastern sunlight on as brilliant a massing of men and troops.

The meaning and import of certain of the other details of the ceremonial began to present themselves, also, for the sifting process.

The sovereign who goes thus, week after week, to worship his Maker, proceeds to his mosque between a wall of steel. During the short length of that drive no subject can approach him. No human hand or

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arm can thrust forward the written petition, that last resort of the subject governed by an autocrat.

Between his poor and his sacred person, the Sultan has placed a fence of glistening muskets. The anarchist assassin's knife and the bombs of the nihilist have had their effect on Eastern as well as on Western rulers. The Sultan has reduced the chances of assassination by the dagger, or death by dynamite, to a minimum. He moves from his palace to his prayer-rug between a living hedge of soldiers whose shoulders touch.

It also occurred to me that the popular presentation of His Majesty on this weekly exhibition of his sacred person, had been replaced by one as far as possible removed from the one conveyed through certain Western books of travel. Where was the familiar figure of frightened majesty, huddled in the remotest corner of his royal carriage? Where were the terrified glances, shot out in all directions on the outlook for the assassin's knife or for the deadly missile? The Sultan who had filled the great scene but a few moments before, whose majestic aspect had made his appearance seem the fitting climax of the splendid pageantry, had nothing whatever in common with that pitiful figure.

Meanwhile, in the crowd below, signs were not wanting that another scene in the interesting spectacle was about to begin.

A perceptible rustle passed along the line of the waiting troops. One knew, rather than saw them to be fingering their muskets. At the sharp, short words

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of command, the muskets were shouldered. Every soldier's back was as rigid as though made of iron.

All eyes were centred upon the open portal of the mosque. The childish figure of the young prince, of the youngest, was the first to appear. He had walked from the open porch to the side of the stairs with perfect, princely dignity. His boy's shape against the shimmering, radiant marbles might have been carved out of stone as he stood, erect, immobile, awaiting his imperial father. His tiny raised hand lifted in salute to his fez rim, this, apparently, was the signal for which troops, officers, ministers, and mounted guards had been waiting. Instantly there was a great movement and stir. The mounted guard wheeled into position ; broken groups reformed ; open spaces were suddenly full of uniforms ablaze in the sun ; and the serried, solid ranks of the soldiers were made still more compact.

With the same vigorous, imperious tread as that with which he had mounted the steps a half hour before, the Sultan quickly descended the short flight of steps. For a single short instant he stood in front of his waiting carriage; he stopped to address the generals, who, in double line, were bent to their waists as they salaamed. After a brief word or two His Majesty entered his phaeton, with its two superb white stallions harnessed *à la Daumont*. This vehicle, low, with high overhanging hood half opened, is, it appears, the one always chosen by the Sultan for the return drive to his palace hill-slope.

The monarch's grasp of the reins showed the whip's sure touch. The mettlesome stallions' impetuous

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dancing towards the mosque gates was checked to a quiet trot long before they passed below the palace windows. As the white reins were lightly held, no apparent effort was shown in the masterly handling of the two splendid Arabians before him. Once more the swift imperial glance was shot upward with lightning swiftness, once again it swept the groups at the windows with its keen, flashing brilliance, and once more the lids were dropped, as it seemed, almost as soon as raised. The next instant the great hood had engulfed the slight figure of the Turkish sovereign.

Behind this hood and beside it, close to the low phaeton wheels, was gathered a strange, an unlooked-for group. Courtiers, Pashas, household aids, officials, eunuchs,—such were the figures that ran panting, pressing, hustling each the other, alongside and behind their Sultan's carriage. The swarm at the back pressed the vehicle onwards, with eager hands and straining backs. Those nearest the august presence ran alongside, sweating, panting. The great drops fell downward from brows that were soon rivers of sweat, to splash the bright gold of their flashing breasts. Thus it is that these Eastern courtiers hope to prove to their great ruler their zeal in his service, or thus to predispose him to listen to some special favour or petition. Oriental obsequiousness, obviously, had not died out in this Eastern court. In the hot-house gardens of palace interiors the soul of courtiers is ever the same, in whatever age, in whatever clime.

Once the Sultan's carriage with its living swarm had turned eastward within the palace gates, and the

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mounted aides, the princesses' coupés, with their black guards, together with the rest of the imperial cortège swept past to disappear beyond the hill-top.

The troops, in their turn, had begun their own retreat.

Like braiding ribbons, the colours and uniforms of the contrasting costumed regiments made fascinating lines for the eyes to follow. Certain of the effects produced by the marching, wheeling troops were brilliantly picturesque. Companies of marines and zouaves marched side by side upon the broad road-bed, to part, at the first foot-hill, as a lady's silken skein might be spread upon a broad sloping surface. The cool whites of the marines' snowy jackets were lost in a bend of trees. The greens of the zouaves held the eye till the greens were one with the distant cypress shades. Up upon the farther hills the pennants of the mounted lancers fluttered their scarlet streamlets till the red and green banners were grey in the dim perspective.

Beating drums and tooting fifes grew fainter and fainter. The iron hoofs upon the hard road-bed were deadening — were gone. Suddenly, before us, the great open sunlit spaces were as empty, as void of life, as before they had been filled with living shapes.

Like ghouls come to take possession of a deserted palace, three or four shabbily veiled shapes had crept up from the lower hill-slopes. Their fluttering figures were pressed close to the mosque railings. They had come to look upon the skeleton of the feast, whose living splendour they might not see.

## Chapter IV

### THE PRIVATE AUDIENCE

BEFORE the stage of the Selamlik ceremony was entirely emptied, the inner palace doors had been once more noiselessly opened. A smiling gentleman, in a long frock-coat, tightly buttoned, with a jewelled order upon his breast, and wearing his fez somewhat pronouncedly upon the back of his head, advanced quickly into the centre of the room. An immediate hush in the talk made his appearance the more impressive. The smiling gentleman was the Grand Master of Ceremonies.

An almost visible tremor of expectancy lit the faces of the waiting diplomats. The trained impassiveness of the older notabilities made their own flicker of hope less visible than was the transparent eagerness of the younger secretaries.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies, after a bow, which included all those filling the room, still smiling, still rubbing his hands one within the other with quick nervous movement, passed all other groups to make his way to the party circling about General Porter. After courteous greetings and compliments, in all of which, in turn, each member of the American group felt him-

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self or herself personally included,— Pasha turned swiftly to our ambassador. With a manner and a smile that imparted to his message a special grace and distinction, the Grand Master announced His Imperial Majesty's desire to receive not solely His Excellency, but Madame Porter and also “their friends.” In a short half hour or so he himself would have the very great pleasure of leading us into the audience-chamber. A low bow, and a final, more purely perfunctory smile, and the Grand Master had passed on to the little group of whom Monsieur Z—, the Russian ambassador, was the centre.

That the coming audience of General Porter's little party with His Majesty was an unusual honour, was quickly, instantaneously made known to us. With a grace and a gaiety as charming as they were spontaneous, the younger diplomats flocked about us, tendering their congratulations, seasoning them with a pinch of attic salt. The Sultan's instinct for reading faces, his almost feminine attraction towards certain faces, his quick dislike for others,— this imperial trait was lightly mentioned. “Oh, he passed you all in review; you were all well inspected, each one of you,” was the laughing comment of one young diplomat. Mustafa Bey and the Master of Ceremonies exchanged an amused smile, impossible to fathom, as impenetrable as had been the lightning glance shot upwards from the royal carriage, a half hour before.

Between the announcement of our own coming audience and our actual entering into the royal presence

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there was a longish interval. The Russian ambassador, Monsieur Z——, was awarded the first audience. As the clear, almost supernaturally penetrative gaze of the distinguished Russian swept the groups assembled in the sun-flooded rooms ; as the tall, lean figure bent in graceful parting salute, and the door closed behind the swift alert frame, unbowed, unbent beneath its sixty odd years of life and hard intellectual toil, it was impossible not to follow, in imagination, this clever, brilliant personality beyond the door, into the very audience-chamber itself. An interview, a full hour's long talk between His Majesty the Sultan and Russia's ambassador ! What move was now being played in the great game of the Eastern question, between two of the keenest, subtlest minds in Europe ? What were the royal lips saying to those dagger-like eyes ? Behind the mask of fair words, what web of high state intrigue was the most courteous of Russian statesmen insinuating, repressing, revealing, hiding ? It was impossible to stop the flow of conjecture, of curious questioning, even though both questions and conjectures must take the outward form of passing, casual interest.

“ Do you suppose it is of France—of the French fleet they say is shortly to enter Turkish waters, or of Miss Stone they are talking ? ” I somewhat naïvely asked of the nearest secretary.

“ Ah-h, madame, who ever knows what passes between His Majesty and Monsieur Z—— ? ” was the guarded reply.

“ If the French fleet does steam into the Darda-

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nelles, it will certainly prove a precedent, in the scoring of international accounts. If the Sultan has a high sense of humour, I should think the situation might, at least, yield him a certain entertainment."

"One's sense of humour is apt to desert one before the guns of an enemy who demands your purse or your life," was the spirited rejoinder.

"It is to be hoped it is all about Miss Stone, and not about France," broke in one of the younger men. "If they are touching upon the French question, I pity you! The Sultan may then, quite possibly, be in a bad humour. He will be gracious,—he is always the most courteous of sovereigns; but it will not be gay. Oh, no, it will not be gay!" The dark eyes of the youthful diplomat danced beneath the wide, olive-tinted brow with a boyish, gleeful spirit of fun.

Once more the great doors were opened. Once again there was an instant of perfect stillness. The Master of Ceremonies had come to conduct our ambassador and his party into the audience-chamber.

With a quick and perfect tact, with supple Eastern adroitness, each was given his or her respective place in the little procession. We were swiftly led onward through the open doors, past antechambers, and a long passage-way leading up to a low flight of steps. Along this hall-way, at certain fixed intervals, guards with gleaming muskets saluted as we passed.

"You will begin, please, to bow as soon as you reach the top of the steps; His Imperial Majesty will be within the inner room," was the Master of Ceremonies' swift aside.

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One had scarcely time for the breathing of the inward prayer that the erect republican back might be equal to the length and requirements of the Oriental method of prostration, when, as we swept up the stairway, a sudden quick flutter of excitement visibly stirred the Master of Ceremonies, as well as our own chargé-d'affaires and third secretary. Even the household guards, standing erect and splendid in their trappings of gold lace at the entrance of the palace door, were seen to move from their statue-like pose.

The circumstance that had created this fluttering tremor was none other than the presence of majesty itself. At the top of the landing, within the wide doors, stood His Majesty the Sultan!

“Bow! Please bow!” was the half terrified, quite tremulous aside heard from the visibly disturbed Master of Ceremonies. Gracefully to perform continuous prostrations while in the act of mounting stairs, is an art reserved, I fear, for Eastern ease and Oriental habitude. We did our best, and even kings could do no more.

With genial dignity, smiling, with eyes brightened as if with inward enjoyment at the surprise and slight confusion his wholly unexpected appearance had brought with it, the Sultan bent forward to proffer, as quickly as possible, his arm to our ambassadress. Behind me, I could hear the gentlemen of our legation murmuring, “Extraordinary! simply extraordinary!” For His Majesty, it appeared, had done our ambassador, and incidentally our nation, the unprecedently

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high honour of receiving an ambassador as royalty alone is received. It is in his throne-room he awaits his usual visitors; there he receives them, and there he stands or sits, according to the rank of the personages, as the latter make the three deep bows, in their courteous progress toward the presence.

To receive General and Mrs. Porter, His Majesty had advanced beyond both the inner audience-chamber and the outer ante-chamber. His standing, awaiting their upward progress, upon the threshold of his palace door, was a greeting emphasised by all the honour and condescension His Majesty could have tendered to any brother sovereign.

In a certain smaller outer room, meanwhile, the Sultan had stopped. He turned to extend his outstretched hand to General Porter. As the personal representative of the head of our nation, our ambassador received the greeting tendered to reigning monarchs, or to chiefs of state. All sovereigns, in high state etiquette, are brothers; all are known to each other as are the members of a common family. When they meet, the greeting is that of brothers. As their personal representatives, ambassadors are received on the same footing of accepted relationship, without, however, the more demonstrative salute exchanged between royalties.

Each of us in turn, after our presentation, as we bent before His Majesty with the best *révérence de cour* at our command, was the recipient of a cordial, imperial handshake and of a kindly, beaming smile. The grip of His Majesty's noticeably small, gloved

*Blague*

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hand was muscular,—it was instinct with a nervous vitality. The vigour of the grasp was a revelation of a strength of muscle and organisation for which the slight, spare frame had not prepared one.

The presentations over, the Sultan led our ambassadress towards the audience-chamber. At the top of the sun-flooded room stood two large gilt arm-chairs, with a huge mirror between them and two long French windows. After seating Mrs. Porter in the one at the left, His Majesty stood beside the other. He remained standing until most of those composing the little cortège had entered the room. Then, and then only, did he take his own seat.

At some distance beyond His Majesty, nearer to the middle of the room, stood a vacant chair. It was placed exactly between the Sultan's throne-chair and the one occupied by our ambassador. In this the Master of Ceremonies took his seat, once every one else had been shown their respective place. Denuded of all state ceremony, simple, unostentatious, of an almost democratic freedom from pomp as had been the form of our reception at this Eastern Court, one was made sensible at every turning of a rigid etiquette ruling each progressive stage of the ceremonies.

The audience-chamber was a comparatively small room. It had the air of a sumptuously furnished European drawing-room, one in which the style and taste of the last of the Napoleons still reigned in the heavy gilt mouldings of window cornices and mirror frames. One was conscious of a prevailing crimson tone bordering upon the magenta tint so dear to the

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Oriental eye. This tint, under the brilliant, luminous, beautifying tone of the Eastern sunlight does not offend the eye as it does when seen under colder Northern skies.

This palace-room, with its crimson-magenta satin-hung walls, with the rich brocaded coverings of the great deep sofas, its wide-seated arm-chairs, and gilt tables, presented a not inappropriate background for the setting forth, and to his advantage, of the central figure of the Sultan.

Seen at this nearer, close range, the face and the personality of His Majesty were revealingly presented.

One was first of all struck by the impress of an immense fatigue limned upon the eager, sensitive face. The true character of this weariness was made quite plain to the seeing eye. There were deep hollows in the ridged temples, the cheeks were sunken, the woman's skin, fine, of a delicate texture, was webbed with wrinkles. But it was toil, not dissipation ; it was the wear and tear of thought, of long years of protracted intellectual labour, of a deep anxiety, of the cares, in a word, of carrying almost single-handed the weight of perhaps the most difficult of all European states to rule, to govern, and to maintain, both at home and abroad, that had carved this accent of fatigüe upon the Eastern ruler's worn face.

The look of race in the face was clearly revealed as one saw it in profile. The line from forehead to upper lip was the accusative Osmanli line familiarised to us through the old sixteenth-century prints. There was the same accent of power above the eye-brows,

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the same aquiline nose, with its arch and droop as we see in the pictured presentment of Suleyman the Magnificent. The look of the conqueror, imprinted on Suleyman's ardent, heroic face, three hundred years later has been replaced by one of anxious, thought-worn care, in the countenance of this later descendant of the Ottoman rulers.

In the figure and poise of the slight frame, there was, in marked contrast, an almost boyish energy and vigour. That it was impossible for this energy to be held long or continuously in restraint, was quickly made obvious, as perhaps the most persistent, recurrent proof of the Sultan's inner nature. Trained from his earliest boyhood's days in the exact, difficult harem school of manners to the requirements of his princely station, the Sultan's dignity, which, in all the several occasions of our visits to the palace, was never once lost or relaxed, even in certain later, gayer moments of a genial abandonment to laughter or of amused exhilaration,—this dignity, apparently, was become second nature. Yet through the mantle of Imperial majesty the human inner nature moved in irrepressible, exuberant life.

The gestures of the small, sinewy hands were full of charm, for they were sufficiently frequent to be expressively illustrative. No one who has heard the Sultan talk, and has watched the play of his graceful, supple hands, but knows the man behind and within the physical envelope. High-wrought, sensitive, endowed or cursed with a degree of sensitiveness almost touching the point of irritability, or possibly of hysteria,

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under undue provocation ; proud, beyond and above all pomp of power, with the pride of conscious intellectual superiority ; arrogant, both from inheritance and a natural love of dominance ; subtle, possessing in a pre-eminent degree the quality our French makers of delicate shadings in language call *finesse*, — to which quality should be added a superabundant endowment of the intuitive faculties, — one feels His Majesty to be a reader of men and of their thoughts — add to these a genial delight in pleasantries, an unexpectedly keen sense and enjoyment of humour and of humorous situations ; thrill such a nature with the intoxicating consciousness of supreme power ; set its sensibilities quivering with the daily, hourly fear of possible poison hidden within every morsel of food, or of assassins lurking behind the folds of every silken drapery ; fire as ardent, exuberant, intense, an intellectual and physical frame with the puissant pulsations of ambition and a determination to hold and to keep his throne in the teeth of all Europe, — and you have before you the complex, the many-sided master-mind of one of the most brilliant intellects Europe has produced within our century.

Those who know, will tell you the proof of the power and supremacy of this Eastern monarch's intellectual force may be conclusively demonstrated in one single sentence. Alone and single-handed, with no European ally to help him, he has fought Europe, and he has also kept this, his throne. With the forces he has had to fight, both at home and abroad, could any other reigning monarch have done as much?

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Such were some of the swift impressions, thoughts, and conclusions that swept the mind as the conversation between His Majesty and General Porter became more and more animated.

The Sultan, meanwhile, had tendered to Mrs. Porter and to His Excellency each a cigarette, having risen from his seat to perform the courteous act. The wax match lighted by the Master of Ceremonies was made to touch the point of the cigarette somewhat timidly held between our ambassadress's unaccustomed lips. Twice the match failed to perform its expected mission. Twice it was tendered, for this among the last of non-smoking ladies had each time blown through her cigarette instead of drawing in the breath.

The laughter that followed this amusing incident was succeeded by quick, swift talk. The rapidity with which question and answer were interchanged between the Sultan and General Porter was the more amazing since it was carried on through the medium of translation. Etiquette requires the observance of this rule. "The Shadow of God" may not be irreverently, intimately addressed, least of all by *giaours*. A certain veil of distance must hang between the presence and common mortals.

The Grand Master of Ceremonies proved his knowledge of both his own and the French tongue in masterly fashion. His Majesty's enunciation and intonation of the Turkish language, with its sonorous, musical mixture of Arabic and Persian, made it a pleasure to hear this peculiar tongue. As spoken by His Majesty it was a melodious speech. The sen-

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tences had barely dropped from His Majesty's lips before their translation had been instantaneously transmitted in French to General Porter. With such an interpreter, the conversation lost nothing in point of compressed vigour or lightness of touch. The commonly devitalising medium of translation would, in any case, have been impotent to quench the vital flame communicated by two such masters of point and epigram. The Sultan led the talk with consummate, easy tact. While no topic was left until it had been as fully developed as diplomatic etiquette would permit, many subjects were touched on.

After a slight pause, with significant gesture, His Majesty had summoned the official Interpreter of the American Embassy to his side. The Sultan's smile, as the third secretary made his profound bow, was the one habitual to such a greeting, it appears, Mr. G—— being high in the Sultan's favour.

In a soft voice, lower than the one he had used when in conversation with the General, the Sultan bade the secretary announce to General Porter his desire to bestow upon him, as a mark of personal esteem, and as a reminder of his visit, a decoration of the higher order. With deep regret our ambassador was forced to decline the honour, no republican representative being allowed to receive such gifts while in office.

In a still lower voice, with a manner, if anything, almost engagingly persuasive, His Majesty bade the dragoman ask Mrs. Porter if a similar rule was imposed upon her. Upon a smiling and quite emphatic

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answer that it was not, His Majesty, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, announced his intention of bestowing upon our ambassadress the Grand Order of the Shefakat. This order—established by the Sultan shortly after the Crimean War as a special order for those ladies who, under the leadership of Florence Nightingale, had heroically devoted themselves to English and Turk alike — has since been specially reserved for ladies of distinction. His Majesty's bounty did not end with the bestowal of this highest mark of his esteem upon Mrs. Porter. Were we not in the East, in the presence of the great giver of gifts?

After a smiling acceptance of our bows and thanks, there came another pause. These pauses were designed to mark, apparently, with expressive emphasis, the ascending degrees of the royal favours. Resuming his low, musical speech, the Sultan made known to General and Mrs. Porter his Imperial desire to welcome them and their “friends” at the palace. On the coming Tuesday His Majesty would be pleased to have us for dinner.

Once more a pause came; and a moment after, to this gracious invitation still another was added. After dinner, His Majesty smilingly murmured, although Constantinople was not Paris, he would hope to have a play to divert us, in the Palace Theatre. “No, it is not Paris, but we shall do our best,” was smilingly reiterated. With these words the interview was brought to a close.

As the Sultan rose to his feet to extend to our ambassadress his arm, and to lead her toward the outer

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door, the change in His Majesty's mien and appearance, since our first view of him, a half hour before, was too marked not to be distinctly noticeable. A faint colour had spread itself above the tinted beard. The dark eyes were gleaming; they were full of dancing energy and light. The deep ridges in the slightly hollowed cheeks and thought-worn brow were, also, less pathetically noticeable. The small, perfectly arched feet were instinct with a spirited buoyancy. The whole man was a new, a fresher human being. The half hour's talk had restrung the somewhat relaxed chords of this sensitive, responsive, human instrument. If it may be permissible in a mere mortal to describe royalty as one does common clay, I should be tempted to state that General Porter's interview with His Majesty had had the pleasing and beneficial effect of leaving this weary monarch almost gay.

Once more within the inner antechamber His Imperial Majesty stood to receive our bows, to extend his hand in farewell, and to send us forth from the royal presence with the memory of his parting, genial smile.

Also once again, as we made our way down the crimson-lined passage-way, was a slightly sensational occurrence to mark our progress.

A quickened stir, followed by a muffled cry, a guard calling softly to the Master of Ceremonies, and the little cortège was brought to a halt; we turned to find the figure of His Majesty once more filling the doorway. With his brightest smile, as if pleased at his courteous impulse, the Sultan stood waving a bit of black in his hand. General Porter sprang forward

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to receive the glove our ambassadress had dropped at the side of her chair. This, the sign of a month's mourning worn by the ambassadress of a free republic for her assassinated President, found and returned by the Autocrat of the East, was not one of the least significant features of our altogether unique reception at the Court of the Osmanlis.

## Chapter V

### TEA IN HIS MAJESTY'S STABLES

**I**N the antechamber our wraps and umbrellas were courteously tendered us by the attendants in charge. These noiseless palace mutes had memories. To each was presented his or her particular property. The scarlet-clad line quickly broke to open the great doors and as silently to close them. These simple acts were performed with the same precision and perfection of drill that had marked the service of all the army of the palace attendants. The Sultan, obviously, has the same instinct of orderly perfection for the minutiae of court service as characterises his Christian brother sovereign, Emperor William II of Germany.

Once more we passed through the stunted shrubbery of the little garden fronting the pavilion. The roads beyond the railings stared white and vacant. They were as bare as, an hour before, they had been resplendent in colour, bristling with the life and movement of thousands of human beings.

To enter the palace grounds, we were swept up the same low incline whence had descended, two hours or more before, the Imperial cortège. Once within the

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tall gateway, and we were in a new world. This fair world was full of bloom. To the right of the fine, level road over which our wheels rolled as if over velvet, there rose a high wall. From its base to its cornice stone — some forty feet — the breadth of the stones was to be guessed at, for the wall was tapestried in a glossy-leaved vine whose scarlet flowers were like, and yet unlike, to our own familiar trumpet creeper. On the other side lay miles upon miles of a hillside laid out in a veritable fairy realm, according to the most perfect principles of landscape gardening.

There were great stretches of beautifully kept lawn. Elms, plane-trees, palms, firs, and pines were interspersed with the grace of the willow and the medlar-tree. There was the shining mimosa, and the lavender-tinted trunks of the eucalyptus, and any number of the wide-spreading cypresses. Below the boughs and branches of this great family of trees interminable stretches of geraniums, begonias, and stranger petalled flowers bordered the carriage road.

The transition into this new world had been almost instantaneous. The change from the outside of a great palace to the privacy of the sovereign's own particular domain was never more sharply accentuated than it had been in this drive from the dusty highroads surrounding Yildiz into the cool, green parklands within the gates.

It is a more or less universal Western conviction that the Sultan's gardens will be found different from all and any other gardens. In thinking of such the imagination conjures up visions of Eastern splendour,

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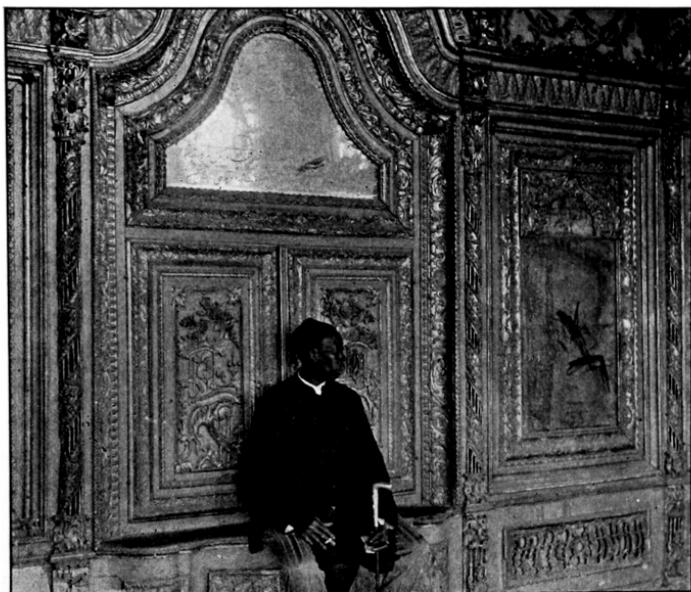
in which an African luxuriance will assuredly be found allied to an Asiatic strangeness.

The park and gardens of Yildiz, so far from being distinctively Eastern, presented a strangely familiar look. Surely elsewhere, in some of the great English estates, or in our own American parks, or in certain French châteaux grounds, I had seen effects similar to those presented in those great stretches of lawn, starred with their blooming parterres. There had been just such banks of standard roses and groups of trees spaced in precisely such effective ways. The Turk, in a word, in his landscape gardening, as in his art, has known how to take the best of that which he has found elsewhere, and has known, also, how best to adapt such foreign features to his own needs.

The effect of this European adaptation to a semi-Eastern soil and scenic surroundings, as seen in the palace grounds of Yildiz, was one abounding in grace, in beauty, and harmony. Trees were everywhere. Yet in the great family of trees there was no overcrowding. Firs and stone pines had space for their wide needle-boughs. The grace of the willow floated its green draperies to see them mirrored to perfection in the glassy surface of the artificial lakes. The sinuosities of the winding carriage roads were marked by flowery lines that fringed lawns as vast and as green as any English park can show. Miniature lakes lay below the lawn slopes. Boats, launches, and sailing craft were moored to the banks of the larger of the ponds. Above the green slopes, in among the tree-trunks, we passed innumerable châlets and little kiosks.

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These kiosks and châlets stirred the fancy ; was it in them that the beauties of the harem came to taste the cool of the day ? Did those fair prisoners escape their perfumed chambers, sometimes, to sniff the better odours of these lengths of standard roses, of these yards



*A Eunuch of the Palace*

upon yards of heliotrope, of mignonette, of the pungent geranium ?

As if in answer to the unuttered question, two eunuchs suddenly emerged from between the trunks of two large plane-trees. Both were young. Both were tall, brisk of step, and, considering they were unmistakably eunuchs, each had a singularly winning cast of face and feature. They had come from the

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direction of the harem. It was presumably their hour for a sniffing of rose scents, for breathing the clear, sweet air, and for the taking of an afternoon stretch across the great greensward. Even a eunuch may not be considered entirely unnatural in his longing for a constitutional.

A turn to the left brought us in sight of one of the outer buildings of the harem. It was a long, low, two-story building whose lower windows were closely grated. The entire structure had the impenetrable aspect of a prison or a reformatory institution. It was due to the splendour of the Eastern sunlight that its marbles looked rather brighter, less forbiddingly dismal, than the stones of other prisons. Not a sign of a human being, no peeping eye, no sweep of drapery behind the tightly closed windows, with their impenetrable harem shutters, was to be seen. This marble palace, set in the midst of its blooming terraces, might have been the palace of the Sleeping Beauty. It seemed as empty and as dead as a tomb.

To look across the cool greens of lawn stretches, between the slanting boughs of noble trees to the glitter of the Bosphorus lying below the hilly parklands — that was a sight to make the eyes dance. Thus seen, the famous straits took on quite a new aspect. Their sparkle and gloss, set into the finish of the garden frame, communicated an astonishing breadth and beauty to the scene.

The drive to the stables was a longish one, for Yildiz is vast. The Sultan has been true to his ancestral traditions to surround his court residence

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with every necessary luxury and accessory that could minister to his pleasure. When, in the early years of his reign, he decided to remove his court from the too exposed shores of Dolma Baghcheh to the hill-top of Beshiktash he began to indulge that passion for building which has possessed every Sultan since the Conqueror. "He who builds dies not while the house is building." Is this Eastern superstition to account for the fact that the Sultans do not wait to finish one palace before beginning another?

When the grandfather of the present Sultan gave orders for the erection of a kiosk in the midst of the wooded heights of Beshiktash he christened it Yildiz — the Star. Abdul Medjid replaced this first kiosk by one still more beautiful, wherein he placed a favourite Circassian whom he called his Yildiz. Abdul Aziz, finding the woods contiguous to Tcheragan, enlarged the roads, built more châlets and kiosks among the beautiful wooded depths, and retired within his new pavilion at the height of the summer heats.

The present Sultan has walled in an enormous tract of well-wooded land. The high walls with which he has practically fortified his palace, or rather his palaces and his grounds, extend for miles. Yildiz now is an immense estate covered with an unending collection of kiosks, pavilions, châlets, stables, and elaborate guard-houses. The latter spring up everywhere. This royal domain is a living fortress. There are walls within walls. The palace we had but just left, together with the chief residence of His Majesty, the

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harem, and the pavilions where his younger sons and their households live,—these are enclosed with an inner wall. The soldiers of the Imperial Guard, composed of the choicest soldiers of the Empire, line this double wall.. They cluster in thick groups about the outer and inner gateways. Soldiers' uniforms enliven every copse. Hedges and shrubberies bourgeon with the tassels of the scarlet fez. The Sultan, within his great domain, is indeed the best guarded sovereign in the modern world.

Within this florally disguised fortress there are other buildings than those already mentioned. A manufactory of porcelain, to visit which His Majesty had graciously tendered His Excellency an invitation ; an arsenal ; a museum containing the Imperial library and a magnificent collection of miniatures, enamels, and jewels ; a most luxurious hammam (Turkish bath) ; together with a museum of natural history — for the Sultan has that taste and delight in animals, and that pleasure in the study of our big and little brothers in the animal kingdom peculiar to monarchs who go but little abroad — with such a diversity of museums and their collections to amuse and instruct him, this voluntary prisoner has within his own walls a whole world of interesting objects.

Meanwhile, as on and on we had been driven, past lawns, lakes, gardens, and kiosks, we came, in due time, to an archway, beyond which a number of low buildings within an inner courtyard proved to be the Imperial stables.

A slight, brilliant-eyed officer in smart military

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uniform topped by an astrakhan cap, came quickly forward, as we entered the courtyard. This gentleman was the Grand Master of the Stud. After the usual compliments and greetings, he led our party toward the stables.

The first of the Imperial stables shown us was that of the white stallions. There must have been some thirty or forty of these of purest Arabian breed, all white, standing in long rows, in their wide, roomy stalls. Those driven by His Majesty in his own phaeton, as well as other favourites usually chosen for the daily drives in Yildiz Park, were specially designated. The snowy coats, the magnificent lengths of bushy tails sweeping the straw into which the clean hoofs sank and were partly hidden, the soft flowing manes and the large, dark eyes of these animals, with their quite human look of anxious inquiry, as they turned their beautifully modelled faces toward the visitors, made our review of the inmates of these stables one not untainted by the pangs of envy.

Stables full of colts; others filled with coach and carriage horses, "for the harem," mysteriously whispered Mr. G—; the saddle horses none ever mounted save His Majesty,—for the passing and commenting upon the equine perfections of all of these, an hour or more was consumed. The usual methods of showing off the beauty and points of the more celebrated thoroughbreds were gone through. Some of the finer animals were led out into the open courtyard; they were there put through their paces, trotted, galloped, or walked. Best of all perhaps was the col-

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lection of pure Arabian colts. Their grey whitey coats, lean ribs, clean hocks, full fat bellies,—every equine quality of perfection centred in the beautiful, clear-eyed faces,—eyes and faces almost humanly sensitive,—made this group of colts alone worth crossing half a continent to see.

Until one looks upon such stables as the Sultan has to show, one cannot hope to realise what the real beauty of the Arabian horse is. To pass in review, not one or two, but a hundred or more superb animals in high condition, with full-flowing, uncut manes and tails, to look upon the gentle fire of their great eyes, to note the power of the beautifully modelled shoulders, the promise of speed in the narrow flanks, is to realise what beauty in horseflesh is and may be.

As an interesting proof of the persistence of the Arabian blood, a Normandy brood mare and her colt were exhibited. The Normandy mare was a beauty of her type. Her glossy grey mottled coat, her thick, high haunches, her breadth of girth and of shoulder, as well as her richly fetlocked hoofs, proved her true Norman stock. Her colt was as pure an Arabian! He was slim, lean, narrow-faced, long-legged, clean-hocked. The stallion put to the Normandy mare had been of pure Arabian breed. In Turkey, apparently, the mother of either horses or men is a mere detail. It is only the male who counts. He it is who transmits the ancestral type. Whoever and whatever the nationalities of the mothers of Turks, it is the Turkish father who puts his seal of

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parental physical inheritance upon his offspring — as had this Arabian stallion upon his colt. The Normandy mare must take her chances of communicating the moral qualities to her unrecognisable offspring.

After this passing in review of the animals in their stables and in the courtyard, we were led up and into an upper room. This room is known as the Sultan's Box. It opens upon the stables at one end, and upon a ring or training ring at the other. The chairs were placed so that they might face this circle. Below, in the circle of tan bark, half a dozen grooms were already astride six of the more perfect specimens of the horses and mares. The grooms sat tight, as the animals, fresh from their released halters, danced and pranced.

The Master of the Stud stood overlooking his ring, as he gave the word of command for the step to be changed, for the trot to be turned into a gallop, and for the gallop to be broken into a lope. Interesting as it was to see these beautiful creatures put through their drill, as we sat watching the play of light on the glossy coats, and the curveting of the arched necks, we were growing more and more conscious of a new and unbidden guest — of a ferocious-fanged appetite. From nine to three in the day was a spacial distance between the two breakfasts to which even the fever of love could not have been wholly indifferent.

As if the anguish of our starved state had been telepathically communicated, several palace servants mysteriously made their appearance. Never was the clink of silver, the snow of napkins, or the sight of cups more welcome to some seven pairs of hunger-

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strained eyes! At any other moment the surprising beauty of the tea service—of solid gold, each object richly chased—would have been banquet enough. It was, alas! that which was within the cups,—it was the fragrant, the delectable perfume of tea that absorbed every sentient faculty. The love of perfect horse-flesh, the passion for beauty, the adoration of the luxurious,—these went down and were lost before thin slices of bread and butter. The group of brown men serving the delicate repast with a perfect noiselessness, their grave courtesies, the colour of their dark skins and their wondrous eyes shining above the sober liveries, even the curvettings of His Majesty's world-famous stallions,—all these accessories were as naught. Behold we were an-hungered and His Majesty fed us! We were returned to the elemental necessities of life.

Half an hour later, our carriages were once more skirting the high, green palace wall. A group of men in long, dark coats were noiselessly stepping past the tapestried façade. Two of them held each the ends of a white, spotless napkin. Some heavy substance lay within the cloth;—its weight attuned the steps of the men to a slow and careful stride. As we passed there was a swift salaam from the free hands. The weight within the white cloth was that of our empty tea-cups. His Majesty's gold service was going home.

## Chapter VI

### THE BANQUET IN THE PALACE

**I**F one is to begin dressing for a banquet in an Eastern palace at four o'clock in the afternoon, to have the lights blazing away outside one's windows as brilliant as the sun of the Orient can make them,—this is the best of beginnings. The bleak, cold days that had preceded this day of days had sent the premonitory chill of winter through the bones. The morning of Tuesday broke with a soft warmth in the air; the glory of gold that lighted the cities and the great water stretches was such as to make one believe in the renascence of summer itself. The weather as well as the streets seemed *en fête*.

A message from the Grand Chamberlain had conveyed the information that we must present ourselves within the grounds of Yildiz by a few minutes after five of the clock. It was against all rule and precedent for any one, for even the most distinguished visitors, to enter the walls of the palace after sundown. His Majesty was an early diner. At no later than six o'clock, at precisely six indeed—for the Sultan was himself the most punctual of sov-

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ereigns — His Majesty would be in readiness to receive us.

For us ladies, there was also a certain etiquette to be observed in the matter of toilette. His Majesty had very decided ideas, it appeared, concerning the European custom of low-necked gowns. That fashion, which is now considered as the highest fashion in American and European society, of wearing the longest possible skirts and the most abbreviated of bodices, has not found favour in the eyes of this autocrat of the court of the Osmanlis. The gowns worn by European and American ladies at His Majesty's dinners may be as long and as splendid as Parisian taste can make them ; but the fair shoulders of his lady guests must be covered. The loss of her trump-card every woman in full-dress feels, who puts her neck into the half mourning of silk and lace guimpes, was partly replaced by the sparkle and colour of the brilliant jewels and rich enamels of the Orders of the Shefakat. The ribbon of the Grand Cordon, with its width of heavy, white-watered surface edged with the Turkish colours of green and red bordering, with the great star of the Order of the First Class blazing upon the left breast, together with the smaller one of the Second Order hanging at the hip, below the wide bow, — all this colour and jewelled radiance gave to the black robes of our ambassadress's rich gown a courtly splendour.

The road to the palace grounds was the same as that taken on the Friday before, on the occasion of the ceremonial of the Selamlik. At the first of the

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Imperial gates the sentinels seemed even more numerous than when we had previously heard their muskets rustling in salute. The same magical impression of entering a fairy realm was once more produced as on our first entrance through the gates. As we were swept past the green tapestried walls, the satin-like lawns, and the gay flower-beds, the magic, if anything, seemed to work a quicker spell; for the late dropping sun was turning the whole earth into a great glory. Across the hyacinthine blue of the Bosphorus, Stam-boul was on fire; its purples, violets, and gold were flames that leapt skyward, only to dissolve in a fiery abyss of brilliance. In the gardens of the Sultan every tree was a torch; the white roses were snow petals dropped on pink stalks; and the parterres had the glitter of brocades, studded with diamonds, with pearls, and with tinted ivory. The miniature lakes were rosy pools, where the celestial salmon cloud trails, netted across the wondrous blue, found their earthly mirror.

At a certain parting of the roads, our horses swerved to the left. We turned inward toward the palace. An inner high wall suddenly barred our way. The gateways to this, the Imperial resident portion of the palace, were as packed with guards as though it had been a mediæval fortress in the moment of attack. Certain pretty kiosks, partly hidden behind masses of tree shade, had revealed themselves to be guard-houses full of soldiers. Once within the gates, these latter frescoed the trees and hedges with their crimson knots of scarlet fezes, and jewelled the day with the sparkling steel of bright muskets.

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A gay burst of music from a military band suddenly enchain'd the ear. "The Sultan's March," with its exhilarating beat, and its strangely familiar melodic strains, rang out with all the clangour of trumpet and drum and the piercing sweetness of the horns. If Donizetti had had the talent to write a march which was sufficiently Oriental in character to catch and capture Turkish ears, Turkish musicians proved they, also, could play the modernised military strains.

The Imperial band was grouped on the lawn behind a company of the household guards. In double ranks the soldiers stood, with the officer of the day at their head, awaiting the arrival of His Excellency. As the General's carriage swept the curve of the roadway, to come to its stop at the palace steps, the guard presented arms.

Our entrance to the palace was made to the final, crashing chords of the "Sultan's March," and to the clicking music of muskets handled with a machine-like precision.

The brilliant sunset lights out of doors seemed to have entered with us, as if to touch with their magic and glow the palace entrance hall. The outer steps were laid with crimson Turkey carpets. As we entered the great hall, this warm, deep colour was like a living welcome, for the marble floors were everywhere overlaid with huge red carpets.

The Grand Chamberlain and Master of Ceremonies were at the door of the palace to receive our ambassador and his party. In their rich court dress,—their breasts a blaze of gold embroidery,—the soft olive

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skins, the lustrous eyes, and the pure oval of the Oriental faces of these gentlemen were in effective harmony with the sumptuous hallway.

The palace flunkies, whose scarlet coats almost swept the ground, were legion. Even more splendid than their dress, were the manners of these Eastern grooms. The august majesty of the most correctly finished English butler, or a world-model flunky, would still have had something to learn in dignity of bearing, in quick, skilful service, and in noiseless motion from this perfectly drilled army of His Majesty's household attendants. The deft Eastern fingers, cotton gloved though they were, were as adroit in the unhooking and untying of Parisian dinner cloaks as the makers of them might have been.

Released from our wraps, the Grand Master of Ceremonies led us toward a wide flight of marble steps. The hallway leading from the stairs opened into several apartments. Some of these were small; others were larger state rooms; all were furnished in the European style, and all, also, were ablaze with electric light. A drawing-room at the extreme end of the passage-way at the left proved to be the one set apart for our reception.

Within the brilliantly lighted, satin-hung room we found a distinguished company awaiting us. Every member of His Majesty's Council — the ministers of the Sublime Porte, as well as the more distinguished members of his court — were assembled to greet our ambassador. The Grand Vizier alone was unable to present himself; he was already suffering from

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the illness which, a month later, carried him to his grave.

The ministers of finance, of war, of the navy, of justice, of foreign affairs, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Grand Master of the Stud, His Majesty's private secretary, together with other numerous members of His Majesty's court and household,—these dignitaries, in full court dress, their breasts glittering with jewelled orders, cuirassed with superb gold embroideries,—these were each presented in turn. For the twenty minutes or more which elapsed before we were led into His Majesty's presence, the talk had the ease, the vivacity, and the charm, which characterises the best, the most finished continental circles. The manners of all these Turkish notabilities were, indeed, a revelation of the distinction of bearing and manner bred in Eastern courts. The fine air of a reticent, courtly dignity imparted a peculiar charm to their most casual words. Their courtesy had the last touch of perfection, one which resulted in the wholly delightful, if elusive impression that the one to whom they were addressing their conversation was the sole person in the world, and most assuredly and pre-eminently the only one in that particular room, worthy of complete and undivided attention. With such manners, the additional factors presented by these ministers and courtiers in the matter of fine physiques and personal good-looks, made one's subjugation complete.

I had been speaking to Tewfik Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the ornamental character of the great glass and crystal chandelier in the room

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where all were awaiting the announcement of His Majesty's readiness to receive us. "Since you like this one, let me have the pleasure of showing you some others in this larger room." The room into which His Excellency led me was a vast ball-room. It was hung and upholstered entirely in crimson,—in a crimson of a light cherry-red tint. There were a great many mirrors in ornate gilt frames, and ranged against the walls were several hundred, I should say, chairs and fauteuils. Above two long, wide, gilt tables hung two of those wondrously brilliant chandeliers which seem to belong peculiarly to these royal palaces. Like those we were to see in Beylerbey, in Dolma Baghcheh later on, the huge glass lustres hanging within this great room filled it with gay, festal notes of colour. Lighted, the monster chandelier radiated a light almost as dazzling as that of the solar luminary itself. The red, pink, green, and yellow coloured glass bulbs, in their tulip-shaped oblong ovals, made the ball-room alive with a softened brilliance and jewelled light that set the feet in tune with festivity and the pulse to stirring.

This particular room had been built and furnished for the reception and entertainment of the German Emperor and Empress, on their recent visit to Constantinople. Other portions of the palace had also been added, for Yildiz Kiosk, or that portion of the palace reserved for receptions and entertainments, originally had been quite small—inconveniently so for the court and its necessities. With the visit of the German Emperor improvements and many addi-

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tions had been made. These changes gave to the palace a greater interest and attraction than if the whole building had been made all of a piece, so to speak. There was a pleasing change and contrast in the size, shape, and position of each one of the many rooms. No two were alike. With that unlikeness came a refreshing sense of perpetual change and unexpectedness, one which makes Yildiz as far as possible removed from the monotony of the state chambers of Dolma Baghcheh.

Within the blue salon, as we re-entered, there was a flutter of rising forms,—of figures moving toward the door, of court dignitaries and ministers standing, to let the Grand Chamberlain lead our ambassadress into the presence. We were to be led onward to the mysterious room where majesty was awaiting us. On this occasion, the rest of our little party found our respective places as best we could. For ministers and court dignitaries waited, until we, their sovereign's guests, had preceded them.

It was a long, it must have been a quite brilliant line that walked through satin-hung passage-ways, past rooms and rooms, and that filed down certain steps only to mount others. The Grand Cordon of the Shefakat made Mrs. Porter's glistening black gown brilliant enough in colour and jewelled radiance to match the shining gold embroideries of the Grand Chamberlain. The simple republican evening dress of our ambassador, of the gentlemen of our legation, and of the American visitor, were blacks and whites that made the ministers' and court officials'

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costumes seem doubly rich. The shining stars of the Second and Third Orders of the Medjidieh worn by the American visitor, the gift of His Majesty, alone relieved the simplicity of the American group, as it also carried the line of sparkling light from those heading the cortège, to gather in jewelled brilliance, till it was focussed in splendour upon the moving shapes of the ministers of His Majesty's council.

There were human eyes to note the figures thus moving onward. Our progress seemed one made, indeed, through a living wall of eyes. The wall had its gaps and breaks, but it was still a wall. It was one that had begun at the doors of the blue salon, and that stretched to the open doors of the room where His Majesty was to receive us. Aides-de-camp, household guards, officers, courtiers, even priests,—the shapes of uniformed men met one at every turning. A line of tall soldierly figures would be passed, framed in one of the long, damask-hung passages. Groups of others, close to the doorways of salons, stood as if posing for caryatids. Naval uniforms relieved the dimness of certain mysterious narrow entries; while beyond, under the full blaze of massed lights, handsome young officers in showy uniforms caught the eye and held it, though the groups were rooms and rooms beyond, in the distant perspective.

In the bend of a pair of stairs, on a certain wide landing, two long-robed figures bent low in salute. Their white hands were crossed upon their breasts. Their tall turbans announced them to be Imâms.

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These priests presumably belonged to the Sultan's household, or to the service of His Majesty's private mosque. The sudden, unexpected appearance of these silent, black-robed figures gave one the very distinct feeling of being very many thousands of miles away from a country where even state banquets have no such surprises to enliven the going in to dinner, as a full court composed exclusively of men and of two private priests.

Eyes, eyes, eyes—one felt them to be looking, noting, scrutinising, yet how civilly, with what discretion, with what clever subterfuge of glance! In this court of men, where women promoted to publicity of gaze were still a novelty, one felt these male eyes to be even more curious and all-embracing in their connoisseur outlook than would have been those of their own women. For two ladies to be thus passed in review by some hundreds of courtiers was an ordeal which, in comparing experiences, later on toward morning, we found elicited no sympathy whatever from the gentlemen of our party.

The perfect silence through which we moved accentuated the impressiveness of this stately welcome. Brilliant eyes flashed smiling recognition to those in the suite who were not of the household. Yet no word was spoken. These hundreds of male lips were as silent as though they had been under the Trappist's vow. As past the long lines of these richly uniformed men,—some in the flower of their youth, others in the perfect period of their mature manhood,—as past their grave faces, lighted by an unmistakably

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interested, alert expression, as on and on we swept, past acres of rooms and long interminable stretches of passage-ways, the silence through which we moved was broken at last.

At the top landing of a certain short flight of steps the Grand Master of Ceremonies and the glittering robes of our ambassadress had come to a stop. There was a long, full instant of waiting until the foreign guests in the cortège were grouped together. Before the person of His Majesty was visible, before those of us even immediately behind their Excellencies were, indeed, altogether certain as to His Majesty's actual presence, we heard again the swift, courteous aside of the Master of Ceremonies, "Bow! please bow!"

When we lifted our heads, it was to find the solitary figure of the Sultan standing in the very middle of a small reception-room. As each of us in turn bent before him, the royal hand was extended to each. The smile was more significantly cordial than that which had greeted our previous welcome.

The room into which we had been led was small enough—I was about to use the homely word *cosey* enough—to give to our present reception an air of semi-intimacy. It was large enough, however, to contain the number of persons within the room, with but few empty corners to spare. The Sultan, His Excellency our ambassador, our ambassadress, our chargé-d'affaires, and Mr. G—, the third secretary of our legation, and the two American visitors,—these filled the square space immediately in the centre of

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the room without, however, there being any undue sense of overcrowding.

The brilliant group of His Majesty's ministers had vanished.

Within the room, meanwhile, there was murmurous buzz of talk emanating from the group of which His Imperial Majesty was the focal figure. Standing, the Sultan's was noticeably the smallest shape among those immediately surrounding him. Yet once more did this slightly built human frame seem to fill the room, to take complete possession of the scene. That indescribable quality which for want of a better word we call magnetism, that nervous or mentally communicated vibration which, emanating from a human battery, surcharges the atmosphere with the personality of certain beings,—once again was this peculiarly electric quality possessed by the Eastern potentate sensibly, almost instantaneously, felt. The room seemed full of life, stir, movement. Yet, in reality, there was very little perceptible flutter or motion. The Sultan remained standing as the talk went on between His Majesty and General and Mrs. Porter. The only audible voices were these and that of the Master of Ceremonies, as the latter quickly translated.

During the few minutes of waiting, there was time to note certain other details. The dress worn by His Majesty, for all its apparent simplicity, was heightened by certain splendours which would have made this bejewelled presence the centre of any royal group, for upon His Majesty's breast there hung the great

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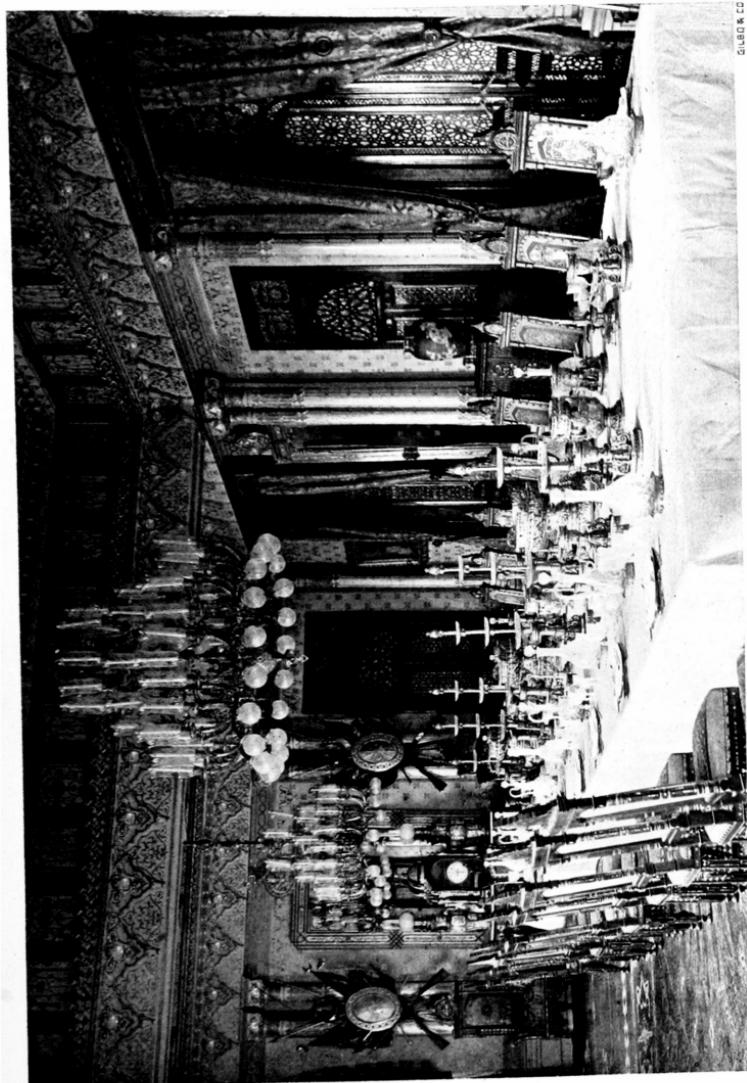
star of the Osmanlis. The Grand Cordon of the Order was worn *en sautoir*; its broad satiny band swept from shoulder to hip, its breadth of green bordered with an edge of reds. The living, liquid fires of the great square emerald forming the centre of the star, from which solar centre there radiated five starry points, each point composed of diamond solitaires the size of huge peas,—this star burned like a flaming sun upon the royal breast. There were, I believe, certain other jewelled orders blazing away upon the left breast of the severely simple royal coat. It was upon the central luminary, upon the gleaming fires of the huge emerald, upon the starry, prismatic glow of the flawless diamonds, one's eyes were fixed, were never done with delighted gazing.

A certain hush and pause in the talk announced that the next great moment had come. His Majesty once more had our ambassadress upon his arm. He led her into and past the landing, where, a few moments before, we had all been grouped. He was seen to be entering, a moment later, the banqueting hall.

The blaze of thousands of lights met our eyes as we, in turn, were led onwards. There was something more wonderful than the sight of the lighted banqueting hall, however, to enchain the gaze. Lining both sides of the great room, from entrance door to the far distance of the tall windows, courtiers, ministers, and grand officials were performing their curious, Eastern prostrations. As their King of Kings, with our ambassadress, passed within this living aisle of his



*A Corner of the Banqueting Hall—Yildiz Kiosk*



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subjects, the grave stately heads were seen to be bowed to the level of their waists. As grain bows and bends at the imperious mandate of the wind, so did these twenty or more red-fezzed courtiers salute the Majesty of the Sacred Person. Thus they remained until His Imperial Majesty had passed to the very end of the line. Then the heads that had been held immovable as though they had been of wood, were slowly raised. The long lines of black backs, so evenly bent a child might have walked across that human floor, the black-uniformed backs uprose, each towering to the height of its natural stately uprightness. As the blazing breasts came into view, the hall seemed lighted anew as with a sudden, dazzling sparkle.

There was a murmurous flutter following the melting away of the salaaming line. The company parted, each to find his place at the royal table.

Once we were all in our assigned seats, His Majesty was seen to have Mrs. Porter at his right and our ambassador at his left. Between the Sultan and our ambassadress, to whom the first conversational courtesies were addressed, stood the Grand Master of Ceremonies. During the full length of the long banquet, this alert, tireless figure was now flitting from His Majesty's right hand, now to his left, as in turn his sovereign addressed either Mrs. or General Porter. His position as translator was no sinecure. For scarcely had the Sultan begun his preluding sentences with General Porter, than the conversation warmed into a continuous flow of speech which was to end only with the close of the banquet.

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A swarm of scarlet-clad figures, meanwhile, were noiselessly serving the *potage Fleury*.

Beneath the myriad lights, the gay liveries, with their silver embroideries, flashed and flamed about the hall their brilliance and colour. Whether this vivid swarm was forming into line, to pass in turn the endless courses of this truly royal banquet, or whether it was massed at the far lower end of the great room, in an alcove, awaiting the signal from the Maître d'Hôtel to begin some fresh form of service, these palace grooms made the moving, flashing, high light background to the richer jewelled lights sparkling above the snowy linen cloth of the long, gorgeously set table.

Gorgeous is the word, which, in a single word, can rightly describe the adornment of the royal table. Adjectives are found to pall — exclamation points would be equally effective — in one's effort to transcribe the beauty and richness that met the eye wherever one turned. Heavy gold-plate urns, standards, vases, richly chased silver tankards, flower-stands, artistic salt and pepper stands, electric lights in silver or gold candelabras, these alternated with floral decorations, or with great fruit baskets. With each course the silver plates were quite literally changed, for each service of the beautiful plate was found different in design to the last. Persian arabesques bordered the gleaming silver discs, each design, seemingly, more ingenious than those previously noted.

These Persian designs were repeated in the decoration of the great dining-room. More Eastern than any

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room as yet seen in the royal palace, it was also the most unique and characteristic. From the open-worked window-shutters, touched here and there with gold, to the rich cornice edge along the upper walls, rosettes, lozenge-shaped ovals, denticulated arches, fluted columns, and stalactite ornament made the background of walls, window surface, and ceiling a rapture for the eye. The dining chairs were Oriental in design, the stuffs covering the seats being beautiful specimens of Turkish embroideries. As a whole, this state dining hall of Yildiz Palace I found to be the most interesting of all the miles of rooms seen in the various palaces. The throne room in Dolma Bagh-cheh alone was in equally harmonious design.

Long as was the table, and numerous as were the guests gathered at the splendid board, the distance between each one of the seats made one sensible of being a little isle of separateness all to one's self. Each guest, to be heard by his neighbour, must incline sensibly toward his interlocutor. It was spacial, it was semi-royal, it was grandiose, perhaps, this roomy freedom; but with so agreeable a dinner companion as the Minister of Foreign Affairs one would willingly have parted with something of one's state to be at less equatorial distance. The pauses in the conversation were filled by the playing of an orchestra seated in the outer entrance hall.

As the *Balotines de cailles en belle vue* were succeeded by the asparagus, and that in turn by the novel flavouring of the iced punch, one of the imposed silences between my companion and myself was filled by a

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strange flight of fancy. Memory had been startled into a curious, retrospective journey. What it was that jostled that particular cell into an instant of flaunting activity I shall never know. But for a long, full moment, the splendid table, the glittering line of distinguished notabilities gathered about it, the presence of royalty itself, the pageantry, in a word, of all the brilliant scene immediately before my eyes faded from sight. I was intensely, sentiently conscious only of an incident, trifling in itself, but pregnant now with potential meaning—an incident of my childhood, of that time when I still believed in things as they were written and printed.

My brother had gone to the Paris Exhibition of 1867. He wrote he was intending to "see the Sultan." "All my life I have wanted to see a live Sultan, and Sultan Abdul Aziz I shall see—if I have to stand for a day and night." "Be sure you see him," I instantly wrote back, "and look hard at what he has on. If he doesn't wear a turban a yard high, and jewelled daggers, and uncut emerald necklaces, he'll never, for me, be the Sultan of my dreams!" "Sultan Abdul Aziz looked like every one else—like any gentleman—save that his hat (fez, they call it) was red, and he wore white trousers. He is very handsome, proud, and disdainful looking. He looked at the French crowds as though they were cattle; altogether, I liked him!" was the pithy description I received a few weeks later. I could remember at this distance of years what impatient, scornful disgust these laconic lines brought with them—as proving masculine dul-

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ness of vision and limitations in elaboration of detail. And the picture those brief lines had painted was so vivid, it had remained with me all my life! Even now, as I lifted my eyes, I was conscious of being guilty of a great breach of etiquette—or I would have been, but for a most fortuitous incident—for with the slight start of awaking consciousness to find the “red fez” and “emeralds” actually adorning the person of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, I was almost smiling outright.

The fortunate incident which covered the momentary confusion with an appearance of correctness, was the voice of the Master of Ceremonies with a message from His Majesty—one which must be answered. The message was of a most flattering, personal nature—for what is more personal to an author than that portion of his or her being they have put into their books?—or more delicately flattering than their mention?

The message, brief as it was, was only one more proof of that “courtesy which kings do practise.” And, surely, among modern sovereigns, the ruler of the Turkish Empire must stand first as fulfilling to the uttermost detail of thoughtful consideration the position of royal host.

The Sultan’s countenance, as the long dinner neared its close, sensibly reflected the pleasure his prolonged talk with General Porter had induced. It is said that this somewhat difficult sovereign delights in men of action. In the person of our ambassador “The First Diplomat in Europe” had not only met his peer,

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he was confronted with, perhaps, as many-sided and complex a personality as those keen, all-seeing royal eyes had before encountered.

That the meeting with and the knowing our ambassador had brought an unusual degree of interest to what might have been purely official courtesies, the increased animation and vivacity of the royal countenance plainly enough revealed. The cheeks were suffused with a heightened colour, the dark eyes were gleaming — they were glittering with light.

That this visible elation of spirit and interest owed little or nothing to purely carnal stimulant, the untouched viands upon His Majesty's plate were sufficient proof. The *potage* had been barely tasted. The entrées and roasts were left intact upon the shining silver plate. A single glass of water —if I remember rightly — was lifted and drained, as, also, some American corn-bread — specially served to His Majesty — was crumbled and partly eaten. A few mouthfuls of the spicy iced punch were swallowed, later on, and, upon the passing of the national dish of pilaw, an almost generous quantity of the rice and meat of which this mixture is composed, was apparently absorbed with something that might almost pass for the gusto of relish. This pilaw —His Majesty was heard saying — was very nourishing; he gave it to his soldiers several times a week. And nourishing it may well be ; deliciously cooked it most assuredly was ; but after a dinner of innumerable courses, our less bird-like appetites had lost their fine edge. The digestive capacities had reached their last limit.

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The finality of ices and fruit brought the long banquet to a finish. With the rising of His Majesty, the room resounded with the flutter and commotion of figures starting to their feet, of chairs pushed aside, of the jingle and clink of sword-belts.

An instant's pause, and the long lines on either side of the table were facing the Sultan. Then, as His Majesty led Mrs. Porter toward the door, the procession passed out, two and two, the foreign visitors preceding the court and Council of Ministers.

The figure of the Sultan was seen descending the low flight of steps beyond the broad landing. As we followed, we found ourselves turning new corners, entering still another part of the palace that, apparently, has no end.

A long crimson-hung corridor, bare, save for the turkey-red hung walls, led us on and on. "It leads to the palace theatre," I heard murmured, in perfect French, close to my ear.

Before entering the theatre, His Majesty had, however, led the way into a certain room. Open-doored as were all the rooms of the palace, we found ourselves immediately within a picture and portrait hung drawing-room.

The Sultan had stopped before two large full-length portraits. They were those of the youthful King and Queen of Italy. These, we were informed, had been "recently presented." A large canvas on the opposite side of the wall showed the firm, motherly, yet unmistakably queenly countenance of England's late queen. This picture bore the date of the year when

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England was Turkey's best friend and firmest ally. A three-quarter length portrait of the German Emperor, William II, bore a late date, one equally significant. When this clever, far-seeing monarch paid his recent royal visit to his brother, the Sultan, after the many festivities that were given in honour of the royal visitor and his Empress ; and the many meetings between the German and the Turkish sovereign had been enjoyed—meetings to which that brilliant series of entertainments had so signally conduced,—there were later no loud-voiced official announcements of a friendly alliance between Turkey and Germany. That Germany intends, however, to strain every means at her command, and to pull all the more hidden springs of diplomacy to the utmost, that she may finally hold within her firm grasp the reins of power and influence dropped a few short years ago by England's strangely careless hand, who that has watched the later moves taken by Germany in the Eastern question can doubt?

The portraits of the monarchs who had, and of those who were still playing each their rôle, in the Eastern court, rose above us silent and mute. As silent, as mute, save for a mere mention of these “his brothers’” names, were the lips of the Eastern potentate who stood beneath the gilded frames.

A moment later, His Majesty was leading us onward once more, through lengths of corridors.

## Chapter VII

### IN THE PALACE THEATRE

THE royal box within which we found ourselves, immediately upon entering the palace theatre, was a goodly sized room. Its velvet-hung balustrade stretched the entire width of theatre. The remaining two-thirds of the house was one part parterre and the other part stage. To the right, on the same level as the royal box, ran an open balcony. Between this balcony and the Sultan's box a richly latticed window, covering a space no larger than the cosey *baignoires* common to every French theatre, hung like a shimmering, semi-transparent curtain. The occupants of this particularly mysterious box could, surely, be of but one sex: these could come from but a certain part of the palace. When we took our own seats the spaces behind the golden lattice were empty.

When all were seated, the bijou theatre seemed full. His Majesty had taken his own seat close to the wall, at the extreme left. He faced both his visitors within the box and his court. The unwritten law of this correct Oriental court might thus be the more easily observed. Once again did every member of this distinguished company face their king, whether

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seated within the royal box or without, upon the row of chairs in the balcony.

The portion of royal boxes usually sacred to the seated presence of majesty, the very centre of the box, was, on this occasion, occupied by the Sultan's American visitors. Between our ambassadress and His Majesty stood a small table upon which boxes of cigarettes, and certain small articles appertaining to the rites of the smoker, lay in dainty gold receptacles.

Immediately upon our entrance the orchestra, seated within the parterre, struck up the "Sultan's March." This was followed by our own national hymn. The beat and measure with which this American tune was played by the Turkish musicians, being much slower than when rendered by our own orchestras, gave to the exhilarating strains a solemnity that turned their gay flippancy into a veritable hymnal gravity. The snatches from French operas that followed these national strains were rendered with admirable brilliancy and lightness of touch.

After a short interval of music, the curtain arose. Some acrobats tumbled their pink and yellow tights across the stage. This was a prelude to a clever demonstration of their various powers in heavy-weight handling, in tight-rope walking, and in flying, in mid-air, from one high-hung trapeze to another.

It was during the silence imposed by the watching of these acrobatic feats, that a certain rustle as of satin and silks in motion, caught my ear. Within the golden-latticed *baignoire* the *frou-frou* of femininity was betraying itself. The slits of the lattice were most

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exasperatingly small. The point of a human eye could indeed pierce beyond those lozenge-shaped apertures ; but for such an outlook that eye must be within the *baignoire*, and not on its outer side. How cleverly had these Eastern carvers in wood made the size of those lozenge-openings conform to their double duty ! The ladies of the Imperial harem, behind that golden curtain, must be able, at least, to look out upon the stage, they must also face the royal box, yet those upon the outer side must not catch even so much as an inch line of face or figure !

Of face or feature our curious eyes, indeed, could see naught. Completely to hide the sparkle of magnificent jewels, for the utter dimming of these glowing fires, a thicker curtain than a latticed window is necessary. Now the gleam of green lights — of what must have been huge emeralds — flashed their serpent fires through the tiny openings ; then came a deep burning red, a ruddy flash that made the eyes blink ; and one guessed at the flawless purity of the ruby from its power of radiance. Besides the flashing of jewels, there was that sensible betrayal of gentle, repressed motion peculiar to those who know they are supposed to be invisible, non-existent.

The acrobats, meanwhile, had climbed and tossed and rolled themselves down into the parterre. They were there to begin their quick climbing of tall, greased poles. The harlequin's whitened face was soon on a level with our own. Being a harlequin, it was his business in life to miss the final capture of the handkerchief that had been deftly tossed to the top of the

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pole. His quick fall to the ground, a drop of thirty feet, was the right comic drop of a harlequin. The laughter that followed was led by His Majesty. Those in the royal box laughed a trifle louder. The courtiers seated within the balcony laughed louder still. Within the golden *baignoire* there was no audible mirth. Human bodies were, however, distinctly to be heard moving within silken or satin draperies. And the shining of the two orders of jewels, of lustrous eyes, and of sparkling gems, filled all the interstices with light.

After the acrobats had taken their last perilous flight from pole-top to trapeze-bar, the orchestra struck up. The curtain was rung down. The interval of waiting for the next performance was filled by responding to the gracious courtesies of His Majesty. Cigarettes were passed. Conversation was more general than it had been during dinner. The Sultan included his more immediate guests in his own talk, this time with Tewfik Pasha as his translator. The courtiers filling the long balcony *enceinte* were seen to relax their more erect pose. The gentle murmur of the soft Turkish tongue ebbed and flowed in rhythmic waves surging after the manner of human speech in any language. The ladies within their cage were as still as though non-existent.

Presently the orchestra struck up a strange, barbarous-sounding tune. The curtain rose. And before us stood the great surprise of the evening.

Naked to their waists, bare even below that conventional line, with loose trousers perilously hung

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upon their huge, slippery hips, with shaven heads, and arms and hands swinging at their sides, two Turkish wrestlers almost filled the back of the stage. Half-naked though they were, their nudity did not seem as complete as otherwise it might, for their nakedness was covered with a thick coating of oil. From shaven heads to bared feet these two monstrous athletes were oiled till even their trousers shone like satin.

Salaaming, when half-naked, presents a very different appearance than when the prostration is executed in modern or even in full court dress. When these semi-nude figures advanced to the full front of the stage, when they swung their great arms in mid-air, bringing them to a level with their stomachs, with their shaven heads held between the outstretched limbs,—then did the Oriental salaam seem restored to its true, barbaric origin. Thus would savage warriors salute their warrior king ; thus would they prostrate themselves before the mighty chieftain who led them to victory, whose word was their tribal law, whose rule was over life and death. In all the pageantry and splendour of this Eastern court, the one barbaric note had been rendered by these Turkish wrestlers.

As they rose from their salaam, the two monster shapes faced each other. Then, with lightning swiftness, arms and hands were thrust out. They were struggling for a hold. The greased shoulders, the huge necks, the supple throats swayed, and dodged, and slipped from the clutching, eager fingers. The two shapes wound and unwound, closed and parted,

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clutched and clutched anew, and still no hold was secured. Only the men's deep breathing began to tell of the strain, of the fierceness of the struggle, of the cost of those lightning twistings and dodgings to wind and to staying power.

The court was very still. The ladies within their silks moved not. Even majesty was fixed, intent, absorbed.

Ah! now "The Terrible Turk," the more muscular of the two wrestlers,—enormous was his breadth of chest, his arms those of the Farnese Hercules,—he who had won his European as well as his Eastern championship,—this "Terrible Turk" had caught his adversary. The coveted spot was reached; it was grasped; it was held as in an iron clasp. He had his foe by the band of the trousers, at his back. No need to wriggle, to twist, or to wrench. The champion's grasp was that of clamped steel. His suppleness was equal to all possible surprises; his grip was the hand of Fate.

Now comes the next round. The mighty Turk is using all his skill to try to throw his man. But not yet, "his man" has his own feat to perform first. For in the twistings, and turnings, and wrenchings, the champion in his turn has been "caught." A great laugh goes up as the weightier of the two wrestlers grasps his more celebrated brother. The Sultan was visibly stirred; the laughter shook the great star of the Osmanlis. The courtiers were bending to the last man over the rail. They were each looking with "four eyes." The ladies were breathing, or was it smooth-

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ered laughter? Whatever the sound, it was hushed almost as soon as it was emitted.

For a great, a decisive moment had come. The champion had thrown his man, but only on his hands and knees. He was not to be bent. To turn him, to make that great back and those starting, straining muscles yield to an over-turn, that the shoulders might touch the ground, for the gaining of this master-point in the fierce sport,—for this even the skill and training of the champion were powerless.

For long moments the heavier weight knelt thus, a huge human shape, unlike anything in any kingdom. The great stomach hung groundward like a vast paunch. The oiled back was arched like unto a dromedary's hump. The hands were purple, the strain to keep them firm upon the wooden shining floor was swelling fuller and fuller the blue veins to purpling ridges. The human hog—the figure was nearer to the form of a hog than to that of a man—was breathing more and more deeply. The champion above him, as he hung over his foe, as he swerved him now to right and now to left,—he also was gasping.

The two men presently ceased their mighty struggling for a long, full minute. The house was filled then with the sound only of their deep stentorian breathing; it became a pain to hear them.

The rest was up. With a lightning spring, the man on his knees was also up. The round of applause, led by the Sultan, that followed this feat, had barely died out when the champion had him down again. Again

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was the fierce struggle renewed. Again and again did the "Terrible Turk" come to the great decisive wrench which must surely throw his kneeling adversary. But only the shortening, ever shortening breaths, and the sweat that was now running from both wrestlers like flowing rivers,—only these told of the skilful, of the masterly yet wholly ineffectual attack, and of the wondrous power of the fallen wrestler to hold his place.

How long the struggle might have gone on, or how it would have ended, we shall never know; for after what must have been nearly a half hour's battle, a rich strong voice, one new to us, suddenly boomed across to the panting athletes.

It was the voice of the Sultan. He was calling a halt. The wrestlers stopped as if lightning-struck. They were on their feet in an instant. They were salaaming, retreating as they bowed, and the curtain fell on their heaving, glistening breasts, on their purpling faces, on their mighty muscled arms, as it also swept between us and the sound of their laboured, their almost sobbing gasps for breath. The evening's entertainment was at an end.

Our own breath had been coming quickly. The blood was hot and stirring. The pulse was bounding. For the wrestlers had wakened the primitive, the natural savage man within. The watching of that mimic fight, fought with the earliest of all weapons, the human hand, the human arm, the fierceness of the struggle, the looking upon the bare nudity of those mighty shoulders, backs, and breasts, had carried one

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into a world thousands of years old. Courts and pageants and trappings of state and splendour were swept away. The man of the Asian hills, æons old, had reconquered the scene. Primeval man had filled all the stage.

With a start—and you waked to the reality of the standing court. For His Majesty had risen. He had come forward. The line of his ministers moved in a sort of open order, away, apart from him. He had come to address a word to each of his guests in turn, before we took our leave.

To this few minutes' chat was communicated an air of semi-intimacy. His Majesty had seemed pleased at the interest evinced in the performance. Our appreciation of this unique Turkish representation was obviously relished. If our gratitude and the expression of our enjoyment were conveyed with an unmistakable emphasis of enthusiasm, this enthusiasm was met by a certain elation, by a more expansive surrender of the Imperial nature than we had before observed. The beneficent effects of the laughter and this stirring of the pulse had not been confined to the foreign visitors. Even royalty is human. Surely that royalty which laughs heartily and wholesomely cannot—be all that he has been painted!

The time for leave-taking had come. His Majesty had moved to the side of the box nearest to the door. The gleaming light was still in his eyes as he held out his hand in farewell. The lips moved with courteous words, as each in turn bent before him.

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The little procession of ministers, courtiers, and the American visitors wound its way down the long, red-hung passage. Once more there were stairways to mount and long corridors to pass. The great hall was finally reached. Against the gleaming marbles, the scarlet and silver of the palace grooms once more moved and glittered. Beyond the open doors, under the sky vault, the night rolled its vast fathomless scroll of darkness. And out of the dark, as we turned in farewell to the ministers of His Majesty's court, to the Grand Master of Ceremonies, the motionless figures of a company of cavalry loomed tall and spectral.

From carriage windows a last parting glance caught two brilliant contrasting pictures in an immemorable sweep. Within the palace the great hall, with its blaze of lights and its gleaming marbles, framed the groups of the splendidly costumed courtiers. And out of the dark the phantasmal shapes of mounted men, horses and men so close they made a solid wall of blackness,—these shapes glittered like a great company of mounted spectres.

As our horses swept us down the roadway, certain of these phantoms parted from their fellows. There was a mighty clattering of horses' hoofs, a jingle of arms, and His Majesty's guard had closed in about His Excellency's carriage.

Through the dim, lonely roads of the highway, through the pale Pera streets, up to the white electric flare of our hotel doorway, did the mounted escort precede us. As our carriage came to a stop, there

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rang out a sharp, quick word of command. The silvery flash of burnished sword-blades gleaming beneath the electric glare of light, a sudden wheeling of the horses to right abouts, and His Majesty's guard was swallowed up in the night.

## Chapter VIII

### THE COURT OF THE OSMANLIS

*TO STAMBOUL*

WITH the brilliant scenes of the night before still dancing before my eyes, we set forth on the following morning. In the ancient Court of the Osmanlis, at Seraglio Point, where, for six centuries, Sultans had kept their state in gardens and kiosks whose wondrous beauty had dazed the mental eye of Europe for long centuries,—it was there our day was to be spent.

Once more the royal vehicles were drawn up in line. Again did the glittering uniforms of the kavass set off the brown and gold of the imperial liveries. For another day's long outing, also, did the several members of the ambassador's suite assemble early, to be driven forth into the crowded, motley-packed streets.

“Destûr!” we heard the coachman cry out. The first heavily laden train of pack horses we met in the crowded thoroughfares — horses swollen to twice their natural size with their wide baskets,— seemed scarcely to give way one inch.

“Vardah-h — Bak! — Zsh-h!” “Stop, see where you are going!” yelled our Greek guide from the box

*Street Peddlers of Simites*





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seat, as we turned a sharp angle. Two grave agate-eyed buffaloes, most becomingly arrayed in strings of blue beads, each with a necklace apiece, were imperturbably swinging their weight into our horses' flanks. Their Khurdish driver gave a cry, waved a brown arm high in air, prodded the nearer animal with the butt end of his stick with force enough to have impaled him, and the two boards that made all there was of the ox-cart, with its load of a veiled woman, a baby, and four colossal blocks of granite, was swung clear of our faces.

A Greek servant in great rounds of frilled white petticoats was showing off the contours of his calves, as he indolently leant his grace against the door-jamb of a European-faced house. Two pedlers were below the Greek, in the act of concluding a bargain for grapes. The decisive moment came in the form of our dashing victorias. After the royal carriage had passed, that particular stock of grapes was in a condition familiar enough to those who are makers of wine.

We looked for angry outbursts, for torrents of abuse. But the shower of oaths which, in Christian Europe, and, I fear, in any American street, would have followed such a calamity, was listened for in vain. The pedlers looked at their grapes, in the pulp, with a saddened air, and then began meekly to pick up such bunches as were still left intact. The petticoated Greek laughed brutally, but musically.

"Why don't they cry out?" one of us asked, as we craned our necks to see the end of the drama, and

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to fling a shower of coins to heal the hurt, unwittingly done.

“ Oh-h-h, they are Armenians, madame. They recognise the royal liveries,” was our Greek guide’s quick, half-malicious rejoinder.

That the Armenian has not always maintained this laudable attitude of Christian forbearance, a building we presently passed proved with unmistakable emphasis.

The Ottoman bank on Tramway Street is a structure noticeably solid and noble. It would have adorned any European street of merchants’ palaces. Here it was that the “Christian” Armenians betook themselves on that day, some years ago, with the very questionably Christian purpose of firing, indiscriminately, upon the defenceless, utterly unprepared Pera population. Turk or Protestant, Catholic Sister or Dancing Dervish, European merchant or Moslem Pasha,—it was all one to the struggling, desperate band of dynamiters and revolutionists who, disarming and killing the sentinels, rushed to the upper stories of the bank to shoot and to hurl their murderous bombs into the midst of the peaceful passers-by below.

“ You may see opposite, on the wall of the houses, where they hit, those bombs!” cried the Greek, with pertinent gesture. The houses across the narrow thoroughfare were seen to be pitted with sinister indentations.

That the Armenians had wrongs that curled black to the Turkish heavens — presumably they had. Their methods of attempting to right them were, however,

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as cruelly barbaric as the Christian world finds the punishment meted out to them by the Turkish government.

The government acted with lightning speed. In two days' time, there was not an Armenian left in all Galata to repeat that assault on defenceless women and children.

"It is here the streets ran blood. You could not walk here, the stench was so horrible. Inside houses, men — they rotted, — yes, through doors and windows even — legs, yes, arms, — you could see them — pushing out. Ugh-h! I hope never to see that again," and the mobile Greek face darkened with the remembering shadow of that two days' hideous massacre.

We were rolling into the squalid, dirty Galata streets, where Armenian shops and Armenian merchants were thickest. It was here that the Turks took their bloodiest revenge for the wanton cruelty of the Armenian outburst.

"Ah-h, we were all — everybody was frightened. We dared not show our noses; but," our guide added quickly, lightly, with the ease of one to whom horrors are the familiar, professional stock-in-trade, "but when we found it was only the Armenians who were killed, and every one else was safe, even women and children — Ah — you ask? Yes, no Armenian women or children were killed, not here, in those two days, — well, we went out as every day we went. Here is the bridge."

The bridge, the outer long bridge, crossing the Golden Horn, was as crowded as though never a day's killing had been done since Galata was Justinian-

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apolis. Thracians, Romans, Greeks, Italians, Turks, Armenians, Christians (real orthodox Christians, not those of the more semi-idolatrous Armenian creed),—each member of the great human family who, in turn, has lived and peopled the Galata and Stamboul shores, was now, apparently, not singly, but in thronged multitudes, peopling the bridge. What had wars, and captures, and revolutions, and massacres done, after all? The human swarm abroad upon the rough, unevenly laid planks of the bridge had lived, and loved, and procreated, to repair the devastation worked by man.

At the entrance to the bridge two smart-looking broughams were at a standstill. The coachmen were paying their toll.

As nothing in Constantinople is in the least as one expects it to be, the over-numerous gate-keepers were seen to be in their shirts. Engaged in an occupation which forces them to the uttermost publicity, these men carefully protuded the tail-ends of that garment in which even an Apollo—were he to wear a shirt outside of his trousers—would look unseductive. These gate-keepers, in their long, white, private garments promoted to be public, remained benignly unconscious of their unheroic aspect. They are there to take your money, what they happened to wear was a detail.

“ It is the Sultan’s daughter; she lives on Phanar Hill; she goes now to Yildiz to the harem to pay call,” said our guide, as the first of the broughams passed us.

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The princess who was imprisoned in the satin-lined coupé was as motionless as an image. The head was held erect. The white mass of veil was coquettishly draped. The outline of the small head and delicately featured face could be easily seen. On the



*Jewish Beggars*

lady's satin-cloaked knee sat perched, as might a bird, a dancing, dark-eyed cherub of a boy. The child's beauty made one seem to be quite certain he was the visible, as well as the living image, of his veiled mother. A slave, also veiled, sat beside the lady. Presently the veiled image sprang into life. Both the mother's and the slave's hands and arms were needed to keep the spirited child from springing out beyond the window. One heard the merry girlish mother laughter,

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the slave's lower chuckle, and the delighted yells of the child, for a single instant. Then all were lost the next, in the noisy rush of the black guard of eunuchs that were clattering, with their horses' noses held close to the back of the carriage, into the thronged street.

What the eyes failed to light upon, in the busy, crowded Stamboul streets, was a woman bearing burdens. In this older, more distinctively Eastern city, the crowds of veiled women were thicker than in Pera. Everywhere bunches of brightly coloured stuffs were slipping in between carts and pack-horses. Now three or four of these tormentingly veiled faces — their whole shapes shrouded in yellow, violet, bronze, or dark blue *feridjeh*, — were seen to be slowly, majestically advancing, and now retreating. The black masks were uplifted in distracting poses ; for no quarter of a yard of black barége, nor yards of silk or satin tied in about the middle like a sack, — none of these disfiguring disguises can wholly hide the young grace of supple muscles ; nor can the sensuous outlines of a richly developed race of women fail of revealment, when such women walk and move through thronged city thoroughfares.

Whether riding luxuriously in carriages, or moving, with indolent grace, along the middle of the street, these Oriental fingers and arms carried no weightier burden than a parasol or an infant. Solemn-eyed baby Turks looked out, as had the Sultan's grandchild, of many a carriage window, steadied on a slave's or a mother's knee. Their less high-born brother, in

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miniature Turkish trousers, whose fashionably cut bagginess between the tiny fat legs made these babies



*A Turkish Lady wearing Yashmak*

in fezes seem grotesque caricatures of their elders,—these with their mothers, in sacks, seemed for ever abroad. The Turkish mother delights in parading

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her offspring, to whose birth she owes her elevation from slave to wife, if not previously given that place.

Almost as coveted a street ornament as a male baby appeared to be the parasol among these domino-clad ladies. The carrying of a parasol, as does the mothering of a boy, announces a certain rank. Turkish women hold their parasols with a tight, clutching clasp. They bury their enveloped heads into the hollow of the inverted disc, as if seeking within that retreat a further retirement to escape from the profane male gaze. Pink, blue, scarlet, purple, white, and black — innumerable black parasols of every hue and fashion were carried by these modest ladies tied up in double-ended pillow-cases.

Beyond the bridge and the great mosque facing it, there had been a little peace in the streets. The shrill cries of men had turned into the buzzing hum of a great city whose highest notes were soft beside the frantic clutch of our horses' hoofs to make good their footing.

A long hill was leading us upwards. The in-drawn breath of the horses told of its steepness. The houses overlooking the wretched pavements were unsteadily eyeing their quick crumbling, as if asking which would go first? Would fire, that incessant, almost daily devastator of these Stamboul streets, flick those shabby portals? Would the wind, after the fire, play with the city in ashes, as it has played, not with one, but with how many a glorious city, now unconsidered dust-heaps? Or will the ill-laid, the sunken pavements

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burrow deeper and deeper, until ooze and filth cover them with their dangerous slime?

An aspect of almost human forlornness and shabby gentility was presented by the streets leading to Seraglio Point. These tawdry, ill-built, tottering houses had replaced the city of Justinian, of Theodosius, of Constantine, of Mahomet the Conqueror.

Like the faces of painted harlots, reeling from a midnight orgy, crazed with the memories of a better, grander life, did the tottering, wretched company of houses seem to leer and swoon upon our way.

On one of the upper streets, close to the Seraglio walls, flat upon the pavement, a woman lay, crouched upon a mat. Her tangled locks and uncovered face were of a strange colour ; the features were fierce, as untamed as were the piercing eyes. "She is a sorceress, a poor one, or she would be well dressed," said our Greek guide, as we swept past. The sorceress had lifted her head. Her glittering gipsy's eyes had turned their fire on each of us, in turn. Then, with a grunt, she had re-settled her gaunt frame, clad in its faded violet rags, upon her roadside couch.

Had she called her magical art into play? For behold! at the top of the hill, the enchanted courts of the Osmanli Sultans were before us.

There was a great line of walls to face, before the inner gate, the Gate of Felicity, was reached. And before that, there was the stupendous mass of Santa Sophia to gaze upon. Domes upon domes curved and circled about the monster central dome. The pink and white stripes of the famous mosque's mixed marbles

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make the exterior of the most wondrously beautiful Temple of God in all the round earth distinctly disappointing. There was mass enough, but the mass seemed formless,—it was felt to be wanting in design and proportion. The laterally placed stones, pink and white, and pink and white, give to the whole structure a belittling aspect. Even the four great soaring minarets cannot invest the exterior of Santa Sophia with that splendour and majesty, externally, which, once within the marvellous edifice, make soul and sense bow down in wonder.

But the horses were being urged onward. Santa Sophia, with its domes and its four noble minarets, was left behind. The tinted building on the right, close by the great gateway, what was that? Was it a mosque, a shrine, a temple, or a kiosk? Being Eastern, it was no surprise to learn the perfect little building was a fountain. Never was water, "that principle of life," more beautifully enshrined. Carvings, sculptures, arabesques in red, pink, green, blue and ivory stones and marbles—the entire four sides of the structure were covered with these. The tilted, overhanging roof, with its curved eaves, gave an immense distinction to the beautiful building. Who cared to know the fountain was both a *Chesmeh* and *Sebil*—that water was to be had in the more plebeian fashion, running through a spout, and in daintier ways, in metal cups handed through the gilded gratings by the fountain-keepers?

At the water-spout running from an arched recess, delicately patterned as a lady's robe, there stood a

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superb young Turk. He had not quite finished his fourth or fifth daily ablution. Though he had one shoe off and one on, and he was taken in the act of wiping the bared foot, his eyes were busier than his fingers. What did *giaours* find so strange in the sight of running water? Washing being as public an act as



*A Street View in Stamboul*

the cracking of a whip, the staring of all those strange eyes could, surely, not be directed toward him. He forthwith proceeded to remove the other shoe, and to squat upon his haunches to the better washing of the brown foot.

“The date [tarik] of Sultan Ahmed flows from the tongue of the water pipe, open it in the name of God, drink the water, and pray for Ahmed Khan.”

This is the message you may read, written in gold,

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upon the slab of a green so lovely in tone as to make the inscription itself one of the most perfect of all the decorations of the wondrous fountain.

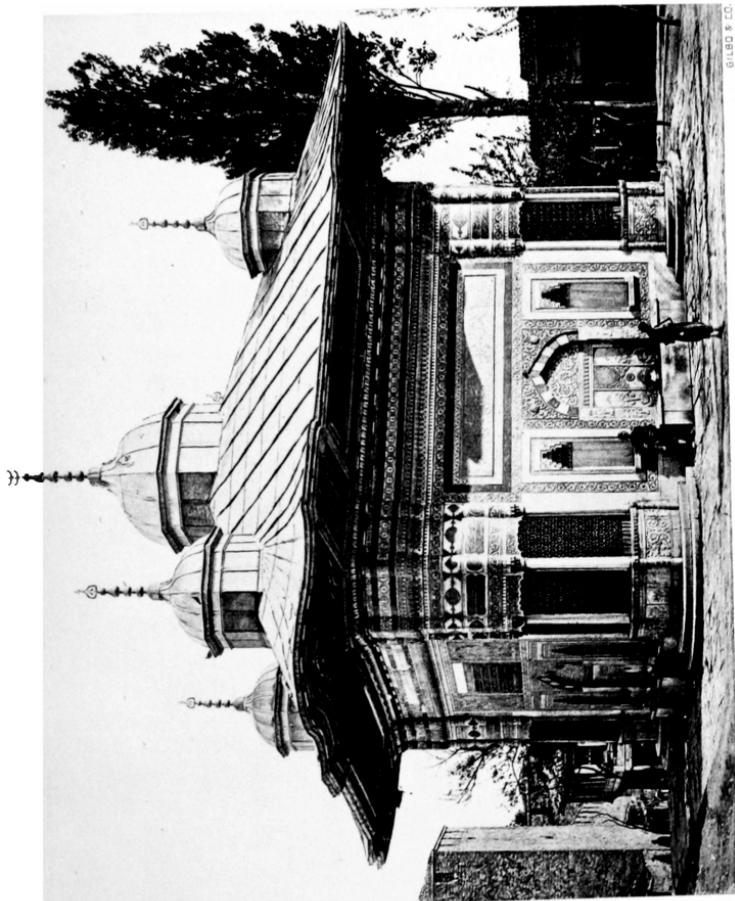
“Yes, the heads of Pashas hung there, sometimes one, sometimes two ; it was for all to see how those who had offended His Majesty came to their ends.” The guide’s gruesome reminder, as we were swept beneath a great gateway, the Imperial Bab-i-Humayan, of the staring heads that, formerly, were the chief objects of interest upon the long wall stretches, — this reminder was forgotten almost as soon as it brought to life those cruel pictures. Yes, human heads had been hung upon those splendid, yellow surfaces ; pyramids of Servian heads had been, within a decade or two, piled high about the great portals. One should have had only thought of these ; — pity alone should have filled the breast.

It was what the eyes saw, as they looked, that captured mind and sense. It was the great, it was the moving, the splendid prospect beyond the gate that stirred the pulse, that would not let one heart-beat throb in sympathy for human woe.

Who has not sung the beauty of Seraglio Point ? Who has not written, rhapsodised over the sensations, emotions, ecstasies, called up by the first or the last outlook of this view of views from the hill of the Sultan’s kiosks ? Yet it is neither of Byron nor of Thackeray, it is neither of Théophile Gautier nor of Pierre Loti, one thinks. Not one of these is even so much as remembered or thought of as one looks and rhapsodises and ecstasises one’s self. All the beautiful



*Fountain of Ahmed III*





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words, all the perfect sentences, are as forgotten as though they had never been written. Come and look for yourself, and thrill as you will to the outlook that has stirred generations of men as you stand before this spectacle of the lifting sea, of winged ships, of tinted cities, of fairy islands, and of aerially hung mountains. In all the round earth there is no such wonder of beauty as this that is set between moving waters and the sky spaces.

## Chapter IX

### THE IMPERIAL TREASURY AND LIBRARY

THE carriages had stopped. We had passed within the second gateway, whose name, the Gate of Felicity, was a promise of mysterious entertainment within.

The entertainment began with an interesting little ceremony. This ceremony was the opening of the doors of the Imperial Treasury.

A number of palace attendants had flocked about the central doors of the low building, before whose closed portals our horses had been brought to a halt. The keeper of the Treasury, an elderly, dark-robed Turk, followed by his attendant guards, had quickly, noiselessly, closed in about the door. Mustafa Bey's sword clanked upon the stone flagging, as he also moved forward towards the black-robed group. One had the consciousness that an act of some high official importance was in progress. There was a moment's pause, an instant of silence long enough to wonder just what was being done.

The opening of the Imperial Treasury is, in its way, a more or less solemn performance. A firman, an order from His Majesty the Sultan, must first of all be produced. An aide-de-camp from the palace must

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

be in attendance, to see the order properly executed. The head keeper of the Treasury and several of his subordinates must be on hand to wrench the Imperial seal from the great lock upon the door of the building. It is even affirmed a short prayer is proffered as the seal is taken off.



*Gate of Felicity within the Seraglio*

As for the prayer, it might or might not have been uttered. The perfect stillness, in the midst of which the keeper tore away at the huge yellow mass of sealing wax covering the lock, was a silence complete enough for any religious act.

The seal was handed to His Excellency. Upon the thick, yellow surface the Toughra, the Imperial official signature, could be distinctly traced.

The room we entered, as the great doors were flung

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

open, seemed small and dim after such an imposing, awesome ceremony. I am not quite sure just what it was I had expected, but it was certainly not dim, small rooms. For the presentment of surprises, however, the East has ways all its own.

Once the eyes were become used to the semi-darkened little chamber, the glitter and sparkle about one, wherever one looked, were enough to put the eyes out. The room I had thought dim was seen to be as bright with jewels as a morn glowing with the light of a golden dawn. Jewels, jewels, jewels! Their glittering, prismatic knots of light were everywhere. Whether you turned your eyes sideways, or downwards, or upwards, green lights, blue lights, red lights, great splashes of brilliance, spotted the room and its upper galleries as though emeralds, sapphires, rubies, pearls and diamonds were as common, as easy to get, as pebbles. The dark room was kept more or less dark — that was quite obvious — that its dimness might serve as the artistic background against which these gorgeous Eastern gems might glow with a more telling brightness.

There was the conqueror's pride in the placing of the wondrous Persian throne, a spoil of war, directly in front of the door. It is not their wealth, it is their conquests the great Turks thus parade first before the eyes of infidels. Of beaten gold, ribboned with pearls, rubies, sapphires, and diamonds, the throne's wide, low seat, upon its wider dais, was as richly gemmed with priceless jewels as are those Venetian jewel-incrusted bodices that Titian's palette has

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transfixed on canvas, to glow and burn with a permanence of flashing lights.

How Sultan Selim's eyes must have glistened ! How his art-loving soul must have revelled, when, after his great Persian victory, after the deadly battle of Chaldrian, this costly trophy was found ! There were other almost equally valuable spoils of war more humanly alive. There were the men who had made this wondrous throne, or their brothers. Both throne and artisans were sent back in triumph to Constantinople. A thousand skilled Persian carvers, architects, workers in metal and on the loom, were set up, along with the throne, in the city of the Sultans. There is scarcely a mosque, or a carved minaret, or a piece of jewelled armour in Constantinople, or even those wondrous silks and gold-wrought stuffs so dear to Sultans, that do not proclaim the exquisite taste, the unspent ingenuity, and the wealth in imaginative fancy of these Persian captives. For the Moslems, like the Romans, have invented nothing. They have, however, known how to copy and how to utilise.

This "Selim the Grim" was the true, the ideal Turk of the Christian's fancy. He was the sort of Sultan every child in Christendom is conscientiously brought up to marvel at, to shudder over ! No primer, no child's history would be complete without him. His gigantic turban, his dark, swarthy face, his gleaming scimitar and his hellish deeds,—these are as much a part of a properly brought-up Protestant child's mental and moral equipment as is its catechism.

Selim was, it must be admitted, both savage and

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cruel. That part of the Protestant's grim picture is none too heavily laden with lurid colour. His passion for art, for poetry, his taste for letters,—these milder passions, if I remember rightly, are deemed unworthy of record. It is the more to be regretted, since Selim's love of the arts was, in its way, sublime.

He possessed in a pre-eminent degree the Moslem monarch's desire for a peaceable reign. To ensure this, it was the custom among those mediæval followers of Mahomet's fierce faith, to put away all male aspirants, however close or near to the throne. Even with the taking of these timely precautions an Oriental Sultan could not feel entirely at ease on the throne of his ancestors. After the killing of all one's kin, of those who might fancy themselves as having even a shadowy right to the investiture of the sword of the prophet, with one's family mostly coffined in carved türbehs, one felt, at least, the more secure. We Christians properly shudder at such horrors. But the Europe of the sixteenth century was busily doing its own killing. In those wholesale murdering, poisoning days of the Renaissance, Europe had neither time nor sensibilities left for the proper moral shiver over remote Moslem customs.

Selim and certain of the great Italian rulers, could they have met, would have discovered many elective affinities. Selim, for example, on his accession to his throne, had promptly commanded the strangling of his five orphan nephews. His only brother, also, was ordered to prepare for death. Yet Selim could weep tears of admiring regret, after the most enlightened re-

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nascent spirit, when reading the exquisite, reproachful poem the latter had addressed him, an hour before the bowstring had made one minor poet and inconvenient heir the less.

Just beyond the Persian throne, stood an upright Turkish throne. The Persian (imported) fingers had been at work upon every inch of the latter wonder. Mother-of-pearl, silver and gold traceries, with ribbony garlands of pearls, rubies, sapphires, plate diamonds, ivories and tortoise,—with such riches were the sides, seat, columns, and canopy covered. Below the canopy hung a great, uncut, pear-shaped emerald. There was room beneath the gold and pearl twisted cord with its emerald tassel for the shape of a Sultan's seated figure, and for his towering turban and its jewelled aigrette. To image to one's eyes the state and splendour of the mediæval Sultans — clad in their gorgeous cloth-of-gold costumes, their persons fairly shedding light from jewelled garments — one has but to transport, in fancy, one of the grander figures in the upper gallery to this throne, and to seat him therein, to have such a picture complete.

It was, indeed, in the gallery of the second room that the full barbaric glory of the East burst upon me with unexpected, wondrous reality. In glass casements, ranged along the sides of the walls, there stood, stiff and splendid, a whole row of Sultans. Think of it! a long endless line of Khalifas! Even the imagination of the elder Dumas would have reeled at the thought. But there they were; you might even take your choice of them, of any one of this

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amazingly gorgeous company of glittering, glistening “Terrible Turks.” From Mahomet the Conqueror, all along the grand sultanic line down to Mahmoud the Reformer—he who seemed almost a contemporary, his date was so very recent—you may pass from one “Grand Turk” to the other—you may stand and look your fill.

With never a fear of the bowstring, without even so much as the bending of your infidel back, or a lowering of your coarser Christian voice—for who speaks as softly as a Turk?—you may eye and scan the mighty Ottoman monarchs, and even criticise, in the correct, kindly, Christian fashion, the very make and fashion of their clothes!

In brocaded mantles, stiff with gold and silver-wrought patterns; in under-vests and flowing inner garments of silks so fine and lissom they cling even about the wooden figures with an exquisite, dainty grace; with vast waist draperies whose glittering lines of light seemed to focus, in gemmed brilliance, on the glistening daggers, the true Oriental waist-belt ornament; gorgeous in stupendously tall turbans that were whiter than all conceivable whiteness, does Mahomet, does Selim, do Suleyman the Magnificent, Murad, Mahmoud, do all of these, stand before you clad in the state of their robes.

Each royal turban was adorned with the very aigrette owned and worn by the sovereign. These aigrettes could have paid—to the last farthing—every penny of Turkey’s standing debt. “I might have to live in a garret, but I’d die before I’d part

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with that one!" cried one of the younger men, in an ecstatic outburst, as, standing before Mahomet II's turbaned splendour, he heard the above suggestion murmured.

Mahomet's famous aigrette — the most valuable and the most wonderful of all these jewelled ornaments — may be said to be comparatively simple. It consisted of but three stones. The emerald, the ruby, and the flawless diamond were each, however, as large as the egg of a lean-bodied hen. The size of the three grouped gems would have made them cover the palm of a man's hand. The eyes, after a survey of such splendours, become glutted with the fierce, soft, dazzling flames.

After gazing one's fill upon such wonders, all sense of relative values is lost. Treasures, jewels, miracles of art wrought by cunning human fingers, — all such marvels of wealth and taste cease to awaken more than a languid interest.

One comes to comprehend the desire of kings for an iron crown, for an iron cot. To pass from these gleaming jewels into the brilliant sunlight was to exchange one sort of glare for still another. One's eyes were dotting round spots of brightness upon the leaves and grass. The sudden, tender greens of the open gardens, the tinted canopy of tree shade, the perfume of cyclamen and rose, — all these pure and living shapes and breaths, with their soft tones and melting colours, I found as soothing to eyes glutted with splendour as, for how many a century, have these great gardens and terraces of Seraglio Point

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solaced and comforted the gaze of Sultans fatigued with the very sight of their magnificence!

There were weeds now in the gardens. The grass grew lank and thin about one's feet. The few flower-beds we passed wore a weary air, as though, in their struggle for life and growth, orderly restraint and neatness had necessarily been long since forgotten. One sniffed neglect and decay along with the perfume of the jasmine.

It is over half a century ago that Abd-ul-Medjid abandoned this lovely palace city, with its great walls encircling the famous gardens, terraces, fountains, and gold-tiled kiosks. All these hallowed memories and present splendours were deserted for gayer, brighter, less blood-tainted palaces upon the Bosphorus.

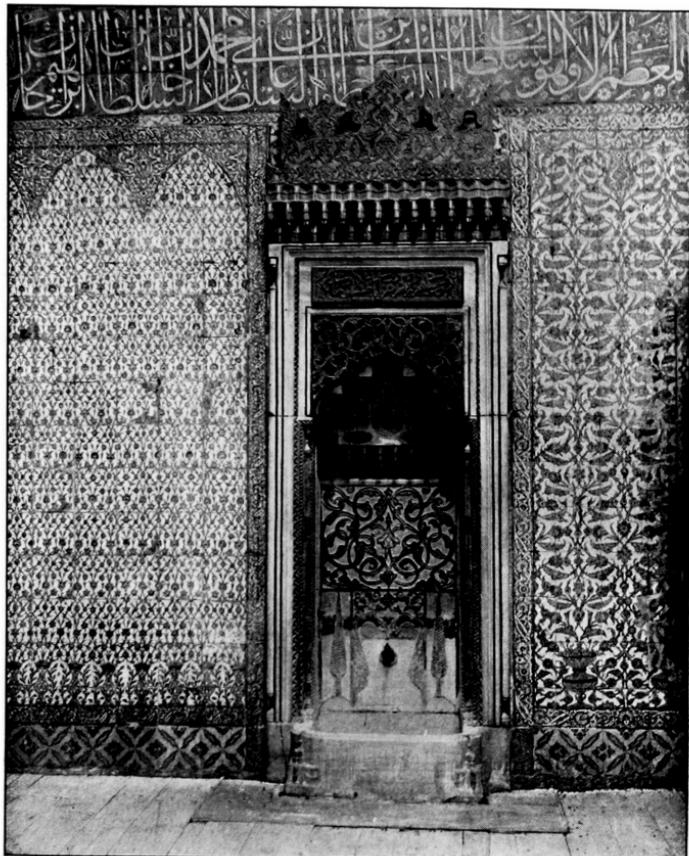
With this Sultan the glory and splendour of the fairy fabled city of Seraglio Point passed for ever away.

This sense of desertion, of abandonment, was the shadow that was ever beside us. We were led along by shades so silent they seemed scarcely more alive than the spirits of those thousands of men who have lived and died within these great walls. An indescribably sad, neglected air was upon all things. Alone, the few kiosks mercifully left by the numerous fires that seemed to have swept the Point with peculiar, malignant fury, rose above the lawns. These were still as perfect, in their delicate completeness, as when gorgeous robes swept into the jewelled interiors.

Nothing is so surprising to the Northern eye as to find these famous Oriental palaces so small. Each

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stands alone. Beneath the shade of the great plane trees they thus present a certain casual, improvised air.



*A Wall-Surface in Bagdad Kiosk*

No one of these beautiful kiosks suggested even remotely the more familiar state of the European palaces. If these detached, solitary little buildings failed wholly to convey the idea of stately splendour,

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of a palatial spaciousness, on the other hand, these single chambers, with but one or two rooms beneath their glazed tiled roofs, was each a house as complete, as perfect, as is a rose at its most perfect moment of bloom.

The royal library was such a dwelling. It was as small as a lady's dainty boudoir. Yet was it large enough to hold three thousand Arabian, Turkish, and Persian manuscripts.

To enter the library we had passed through doors that were miracles of Arabian art. Only the Persian imagination, fed on far-away, vanished forms of perfect grace, on sinuosities of lines lost to Western memories, on secret ways of handling bronze, only Arabian fingers, in a word, could have limned such stars and triangles, such rose-edged shapes of loveliness.

Within the library the walls and floors were softly sparkling with the glow of old Persian tiles. Innumerable manuscripts lay cross-wise, in Moorish fashion, within the cedar casements. A single cushion, its embroidered satins turned to tenderest grey, was puffed to luxurious distension upon the mosaiced floor. Directly in front stood a low, flat mother-of-pearl table, exactly right as to height and position for a reader of manuscripts, one who sat cross-legged upon the great cushion. Such was the sole furniture of the royal library. Yet with such a light as was sifting through the jewelled Persian glass, with this waiting pillow, with the sheen of beauty shining from the jewel-like walls, what lover of books, what courtier of

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the kingdom of men's minds, but would find in this tulip-hued library the perfect hour ?

Here Ghazi Fasil, the Turkish warrior-poet could smite upon his poet's cymbals till all the air was thick with heroes. Here would Fuzuli have cried to his "loved one," and suddenly the tulip-bloom upon the shining walls would change to living lips of coral, to lustrous eyes, to snowy, bursting bosoms, gauze draped.

" Hark the bulbul's blithesome carol ;  
Now are come the days of spring —

Drink, be gay ; for soon will vanish,  
Biding not the days of spring."

Mirihi's poem, carolling to the nightingales bubbling their ecstasies from the outer tree branches, would have sent verse-loving Sultan or dreaming vizier beyond the green-hued library to taste the perfume of living love upon musk-scented lips.

Would the lord of the harem toss the great gift of his swift desire to Kadines, to Shagirds, or to Jarigas ? Should the royal favour carry joy to waiting royal lady, boring her life away in gilded pavilion yonder, or should it lift a slave, seen and unnoticed but a moment since, to undreamed-of heights of rank and dignity ? Or would some youthful, budding novice, be called, by swift-footed eunuch, to light in royal eyes, dulled to fatigue with the looking on women's beauty, a faint, fleeting gleam of ardour ?

## Chapter X

### THE HAREM AND COURT OF THE SERAGLIO

**I**T was in the very middle of the harem gardens that the pavilion of the Grand Signior shone, a jewel set amongst jewels. About this central court of glory were grouped also the pavilions of the Grand Signior's Kadines, his lawful wives. Each lady had her separate kiosk and attendants, to which honour a lady of the harem attained only after the birth of a son. Innumerable were the other smaller kiosks and buildings housing the great multitude of women and eunuchs forming the Imperial harem. The whole of this part of the old Seraglio was separated from the outer parts by a massive wall and by fourfold gates. Two of these latter there were of iron, and two were of bronze. Black eunuchs guarded each of these gates, as they feared for their lives, both night and day.

It was within these closed walls that hundreds of young girls were brought, year after year, century following after century. Knowing not whence they came, sometimes acquired as spoils of war, or purchased from far-away merchants trafficking in woman's beauty, with country, parentage, creed, all an obliterated page in childhood's misty records: these maidens were brought to the Imperial harem. Within the

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harem walls these lovely young Georgians, Circassians, Greeks, and Armenians were housed. Here they



*A Greek in Turkish Costume*

received an education in manners and accomplishments which were to fit them to be the companions of the being they were taught to believe was the greatest of

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earthly kings. Their beauty also was developed to its utmost seductive allurement.

These flowers of Desire were pruned and shaped by a multitude of skilled fingers. Voice, speech, gesture, bearing,—each and all of these were trained to exquisite, finished perfection. In that school of love were taught the secret arts of seductive glances, the charm of poetic language and imagery, all the subtleties of languishing poses, every possible incitement wrought by the grace of the body in the whirl and plastic pose of the lascivious Eastern dances. Through each progressive phase of such arts must the crude, half-savage beauty pass.

When the educated slave—a sort of Under Mistress of the Robes—when the Grand Mistress of Ceremonies, when last of all the Valideh-Sultan, the mother of the Sultan,—when these passed the novice through her two years' apprenticeship, then all life held but one hope, one longing, one desire! Who of them all would be chosen by the Valideh-Sultan as the Baïram offering? Or would the eye of their lord single them out? Would the eager, jealous ear hear the soft tripping step of the black-faced eunuch, a welcome, beloved face for once, hear him stop at the door, to beckon, to lead to the Room of Rooms?

In darkness and in mystery the queen-bee passes her life amid the golden walls of her symmetrically built hive. In the midst of the amber-hued draperies of perfumed honey, this queen of thousands of her subjects, all issue of her thighs, continues, in a darkness as bright as day to her million-faucetted eye, her work of conscientious maternity. She holds herself,

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her sexual instincts, her powers of reproduction, obedient to the inscrutable law of a destiny whose fatality she never questions.

In the golden sunlit chambers of the harem, not one, but hundreds of queen-bee women work, as they have worked for centuries, under the laws ordained by the Mahometan male.

A nod from their master to his slave, and the curtain of the harem is lifted. The favourite of a night, of a week, of a month, or of years, swings her beauty forward upon her slippers feet. All her being is in palpitant expectancy for the single hour of life in which she is fully permitted to live. The rare, the perfect moment over, the gift of all her being given, back to her cell-like chambers goes the queen-bee Circassian, there to work out in the darkness of seclusion, of sterile pleasures, of petty, embittering jealousies, the labour of maternity appointed her.

Who can guess the long succession of revolts among these primitive hot-house bred voluptuaries? Who has registered the stifled longings? Who responded to the wild flutterings among these caged birds for a wider, fuller existence; for the life of freedom beyond the golden chamber, beyond the latticed window, beyond the maddening trickle of falling water and the throbbing torture of the nightingales' songs?

How many a puissant effort, how many hot, heroic struggles have the cushioned divans and tiled walls of the harem pavilions heard and seen, only to have the tragical end whispered by the bubbling Bosphorus to the silent shores, as one more woman's shape went

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downward, beneath the far-away stars, to punish it for having tried to live!

Yet the laws governing the inscrutable destiny of bees, and also those determining the fate of many Christian women, is no kinder.

To ensure the safety of the lords who lived and reigned in these and those hundreds of other iridescent palaces fire has consumed, what armies of guards were assembled about towers and walls!

Fifty porters alone stood on guard at the outer Imperial gateway. Within the second court, the celebrated company of the Janissaries was drawn up. To this day it is called the Court of the Janissaries. We had passed it, and the famous tree of sinister memories, on our way to the Gate of Felicity.

These famous warrior-guards, the Janissaries, were all foreign born. Like the ladies of the harem, not one was a true Turk. All were foreigners. Knowing neither father, mother, kith nor kin, having been seized as children, they had been carried as captive slaves to the palace. Many of these children were the offspring of Christian parents. Their training was that of native-born Turks. They were to know no father save their Grand Signior, no religion or God save the religion of Mahomet and of his earthly representative, the Khalifa.

Besides the Imperial guard, there were thousands of other officials with magnificent sounding titles. This army of human beings within the great walls was one absolutely necessary to maintain and to complete the state of as complicated and elaborate a court as was that of the great monarchs of the Osmanli race.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

There were masters of the outside, and masters of the inside. There were masters of the stud, and of the stirrup. Masters of the hunt had under-masters. There were first and second imams or chaplains, chief physicians, chief astrologers, chief surgeons and chief



*The Great Plane in the Court of the Janissaries*

oculists ; a lord of the banner, a chief gardener, a controller of the porters, a chief herald, and a chief tent-pitcher. For what service, for what pettiest act of life, or for what most trifling pleasure, had there not been a master post created in this monster court where patronage centred in the person of a single lavish sovereign ?

To enumerate the mere titles of those favoured beings who held office in this fabulously luxurious

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court would require pages upon pages of closely printed text. Take, for example, this description of the duties and offices of the Aghas, or masters of the inside:

The private household of the Sultan consisted of two classes, pages and eunuchs. The pages were divided into four companies called Odas or chambers. The first of these was the khāss Oda or Royal Chamber which comprised forty members, the Sultan himself being reckoned the fortieth. All the members of this company were officers of high standing and great influence. He who commanded all the four chambers, and acted as major domo of the palace, bore the title of Silahdar Agha, or master sword-bearer, because he always followed the Sultan, carrying the imperial scimitar in its scabbard over his shoulder, grasping it near the point, so that the hilt was behind his head. He wore a magnificent robe of scarlet and gold brocade and a very strange head-dress adorned, like the cap of the Tressed Halberdiers, with two locks of artificial hair.

No one, except, perhaps, the grand eunuch, was more intimate with the Sultan than the sword-bearer, who often possessed immense influence, and was not infrequently raised to the grand viziership, grand admiralship, or some other important office of state.

Sixteen of the other officers of this chamber had titles indicative of the services they performed about the Sultan's person. Thus there were the master vesturer, one of whose duties it was to follow the Sultan in processions and cast handfuls of silver coins among the people; the master stirrup-holder, who held the Sultan's stirrup when he mounted his horse; the master of the turban, who had charge of the imperial turbans, one of which he carried in the procession, inclining it slightly to right and to left as a salutation to the people. The master of the napkin, the master ewer-keeper, who poured the

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water on the Sultan's hands when he made the ablutions ; the private secretary ; the chief turban winder ; the chief coffee-server ; the chief barber . . . .

Where shall one end ? Yet one would not wish to slight the aigrette keeper ; nor he who had in charge the gold and jewelled ornaments with which the royal turbans were adorned, nor yet the robe keeper, who watched over the state robes which were never presented to His Majesty without having been first perfumed with aloes-wood ; nor was the post of chief nightingale keeper one to be despised. Even to be chief parrot keeper was a much coveted post, one rich in promise of wealth in a court where favours and gifts were fairly rained upon those who had caught the Sultan's fancy.

One seems to hear the echoing tread of other multitudes of courtiers and officials. The palaces of the Roman Cæsars held such a world of sycophants and parasites. The same swarm, answering to as strange-sounding titles, crowded the court of the sacred palaces of Justinian. On yonder hill, a stone's throw beyond the outer walls of this Seraglio court, those former golden mosaiced halls are crumbled now to unconsidered dust heaps. The very streets overlooking the purpling sea are greyed, as though besprewed with the ashes of an empire that six short centuries ago rivalled the sun in its golden shining.

The Roman and the Eastern Cæsars died and their parasite's, courts, and courtiers have died with them. Yet on and on, through the labyrinthian mazes of historic change, new multitudes of men arise to reform,

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to repeat the same old sycophantish rôles, to play to their finish the parts of perfect courtiers about some central, all-powerful figure.

In the Rome of the Medici popes, in the Constantinople of grandeur-loving Sultan, and later, in more distant Versailles, the swarm of big and little men circled about popes and Sultans and the Bourbons. The voices and the laughter, the sighs of hope, the accents of despair that have echoed through the iridescent walls of this Moslem court, centuries later have chorussed the same human notes beneath the marbled lengths of the Versailles of the "Sun-god." Kings and courtiers, in different ages and in alien countries, are yet strangely alike. For the mould of character in which such patterns of men are cast are not as varied as is their nationality.

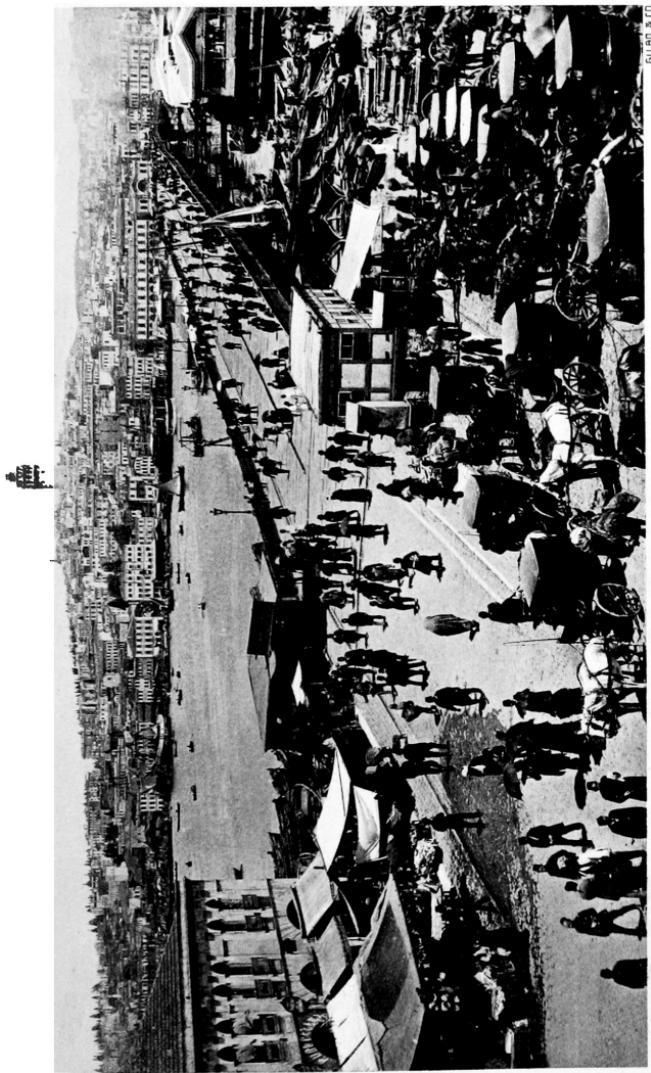
Meanwhile, on and on we had wandered. From scant garden-bed to tree shade, from tiled kiosk to later summer palaces the sombre-faced palace attendants, in their dark, severely simple uniforms — with slanting oblique glances that lost not a single gesture, that covered each one of His Majesty's guests with an all-enveloping watchfulness, — these black-clad, silent, brilliant-eyed attendants had led us on and on.

Now we had passed from the delicious warmth of the rich autumnal sunshine into the cool chambers of the Baghdad Kiosk. Once within its glittering walls, and the glory of that dead and gone court of the older Osmanlis relived in quickened, if brief, effulgence of splendour.

Of all the palaces that have survived the fires that



*Pera from the Caïques Landing in Stamboul*



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have swept this famous Point, almost as continuously as have the winds from sea and mountain heights, Bagh dad Kiosk best preserves the features of that unique perfection of beauty that made these miniature Oriental palaces the marvels of the world. Like unto all the other kiosks, Bagh dad Kiosk is small. Its two or three chambers have the character of rooms especially designed for intimate privacy. In such chambers half a dozen persons would crowd the floor spaces. Two would find the rooms exactly right for all purposes of luxurious intercourse. If silence ensued, as one leant upon the pillows of the scented divans, what a marvel of colour were the tiled surfaces, still aglow with tones and shades only Nature herself can outrival. Tulips, hyacinths, the faint pallor of tinted pinks, the iridescence of bird-plumage, the emerald depths of sea-tones,—you may have any and all of these to-day by the lifting of an eyelid. If your taste is for carved woods, the doors and window-shutters, the low tables and curtain-panelled walls, will trace you fairy patterns of Persian fancies, touched here and there with the gleam of seed-pearls or pale ivories.

A bedimmed, rosy twilight is the perpetual lighting of this kiosk. Within the horse-shoe arched windows the tiny mosaics of the myriad-hued Persian glass turn the glare of the Eastern sunshine into a rose light. Complexions are beautified, outlines are softened and harmonised, the colours of stuffs and satins are enriched under this transforming medium. Commonplace men and women become suddenly endowed with charm and a softened beauty, in such sur-

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roundings. One could faintly image the setting of certain scenes, when, within this jewelled background, there swept the gorgeous robes of scarlet and gold, of the whites and sables, of glistening silver vestments and the massed jewelled turbans of ministers of state and of high officials come to prostrate themselves before the mighty being whose own splendour outdid that of his courtiers as the sun outshines the stars.

## Chapter XI

### SOME AMBASSADORS AT THE COURT OF THE OSMANLIS

**I**F there was one room in which that dead-and-gone pageant gathered thickest, where the rustle of stiffly wrought gold and silver robes seemed still to catch upon the ear and to hold the sense, it was in the throne room.

Once within the kiosk of the Great Divan, and how the eyes widened! The throne room of the Osmanlis was a small, an almost indiscreetly cosey bed-chamber. Yet this single chamber, with its huge four-posted divan, a structure half bed, half couch, half throne, this amazing little room had seen enshrined, in mysterious magnificence, behind closed satin curtains, the awful majesty of the Grand Signior.

In such rooms, the Western imagination must perform a mental somersault. Memory must also toss aside the encumbering mass of associations. To see beyond the obstructing barriers of the usual palace state chambers wherein we are wont to seat a Julius II, a Francis I, or the Autocrat of the Russias, we must return to the strangely conglomerate taste and traditions of the East — and of this nearer, warlike East — whose Sultans have retained a sort of centaur-like duality. Lovers of pomp and circumstance, their

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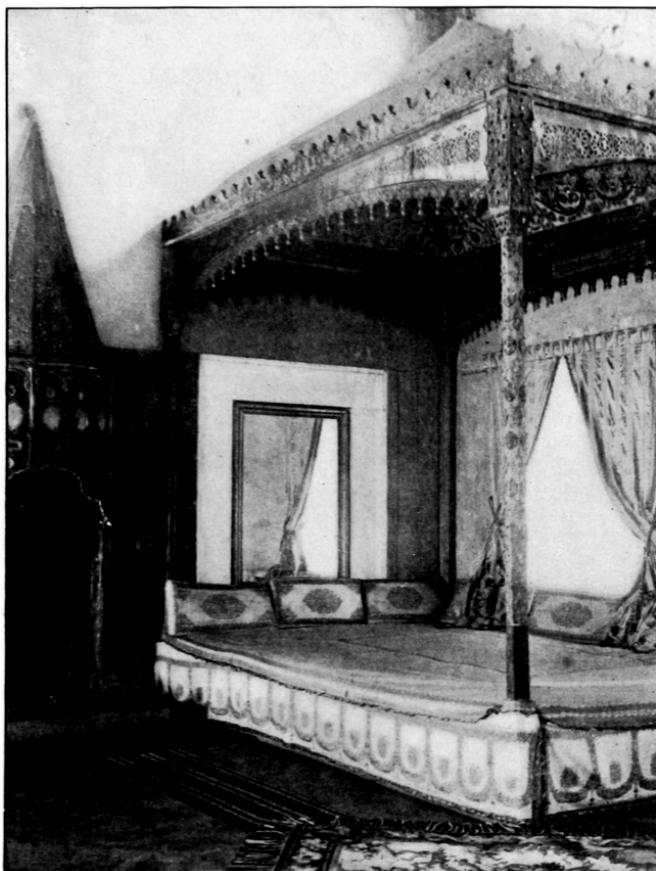
true base was that of born fighters. Happiest when under the eaves of a tent, of this, their delight in small interiors that recalled more or less the shape and form of their tented homes, the Sultans have only recently, within the past half century, wholly shaken themselves free. This inrooted, fundamental Turkish adoration of the tent once fully grasped, as one stands within the diminutive Hall of the great Divan one's wonder changes to complete understanding.

With this clue in one's hand, many things become clear. This cosey chamber, its semi-barbaric Divan,—too vast for a bed, the couch that was indeed resting-place, board and throne in one,—this chamber and Divan are now become entirely comprehensible. The kiosk is but the tent of the Padishah; it has been beautified and adorned, yet it still retains the small proportions of those older portable houses over-roofed with starry sky spaces. The famous Divan itself is the reproduction of those, its elder models, that were set beneath the gold-knobbed pinnacles of Suleyman the Magnificent's gorgeous tents.

Between the famous Imperial tent that glittered before the anxious eyes of those whose sharpest vision from Vienna's St. Stephen's tower could not overlook the last limit of that great army Suleyman had gathered before the walls of the Austrian capital, and this dainty, luxurious throne room, this more permanent tent-like room,—between these two interiors there must have been a striking similarity. Both were satin-hung; both had their jewel-encrusted divans; both were the curtained throne interiors whence issued the thunder-

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ous war-voices of the greater Sultans, and the later feebler voices of the Grand Viziers, administering or



*The Grand Divan*

mal-administering law and justice when their masters had begun to tread the deadening paces of the sloth and the debauchee.

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As the eyes followed the columns of the divan, these were seen to be exquisite. The inlaying of pearls and diamonds, of uncut sapphires, topaz, and emeralds, was as fine as the pattern of a costly lace. The satin-draped couch-covering and pillows were now paled to pearly tints. The Persian-tiled, cone-shaped chimney, beneath whose pointed top, in the older days, had stood the golden brazier with its charcoal fumes to thicken an air clogged with the breath of thronging courtiers,—this gleaming chimney was the strong colour-note of the room.

Within the delicate-toned chamber there appeared to have crept, along with the desertion and silence, a vague expectancy.

The great couch seemed to await a coming royal form. The flutter and rustle of dead and gone multitudes of courtiers,—surely one still heard a perpetuated echo of their bristling robes, stiffened with jewels. Gradually, imperceptibly, within this Hall of the great Divan, a shadowy company began to re-assemble. Some of the once all-powerful Sultans; their mighty court; the stately, pompous, glittering Eastern world of rulers,—with these was this dainty jewel-hung hall refilled. One scene above all others loomed forth from the background of the great historic Eastern drama. Pulsating with life, vivid and vibrant, its actors seemed to move in sentient life before the seeing eye.

It was in the days when grand eunuchs walked about their gardens in garments whose embroidered surfaces seemed the flowers clustering below their yellow

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morocco boots, flown to find unfading brilliance upon a satin coat ; when the chief scullion could saunter abroad in processional gravity shouldering a gigantic ladle, and not feel himself to be ridiculous ; when kiosks, and the halls of the pages, and the inner and outer courts of the Sultan's Seraglio, were aswarm with Solaks, with Tressed Halberdiers, with heralds, and with thousands and thousands of guards, not one of whom was worth the meanest of any one of their magnificent garments, when it came to the crucial moment of a poisoned dagger thrust between the ribs of a royal body, or a palace intrigue among the Janissaries.

The scene the English traveller, Knolles, is to paint for you further on, was set in the days of Selim, known as the Sot. This degenerate son of a glorious father presented the not uncommon type of the vicious offspring of a great military and administrative genius.

Suleyman the Great, magnificent alike as warrior, ruler, and conqueror, had left behind him the supremacy of the Ottoman power at its climax of glory. Merely to enumerate the cities over which floated the Star and the Crescent of that mediæval period, would be to name most of the cities known to us through Biblical and classical history. Suleyman's day had been the day of great admirals ; and the Eastern adventurers, pirates, and buccaneers whom Suleyman's genius had known how to control and how to fire with noble enthusiasms, valour, and the courage of patriots, had swept the seas as far as the coasts of Spain.

“The Ottoman crescent touched the Atlas and the

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Caucasus. . . . The Nile, the Jordan, the Orontes, the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Tanais, the Borysthenes, the Danube, and the Illysus rolled their waters within ‘the shadow of the horse-tails.’ ”

From Mecca to Buda, in Hungary, from Baghdad to Algiers, out to the boundaries of Morocco, Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey,— over all of these the Eastern Ottoman sovereign was king and ruler.

Such was the empire left by the sovereign who had become one of the great world powers of his day, to be ruled over by one of the world losers, by his effeminate, degenerate son.

With Selim II, the “sick man” entered upon the stage of European politics. In the three succeeding centuries of decline, of which this inadequate offspring of genius was the initiator, this interesting political invalid has never failed to be among the most prominent of all the *dramatis personæ* who have peopled the shifting scenes of European historic drama.

Selim, the first original of the great rôle of Turkey’s constitutional invalid, was possessed of all the self-complacency of an egotist in poor health. With possessions so vast, why bother one’s head about further conquests? With an army as superbly disciplined, why fear the “piping days of peace”? With a court as magnificent as this of the Seraglio, why not stop at home, and enjoy its beauties and luxuries? What were baths and women, and thousands upon thousands of courtiers for, if their owner, husband, ruler, were for ever absent?

The inevitable results of that most insidiously fatal

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logic are submitted to your inspection by Turkey's history of the past three hundred years.

In the days of Knolles, when he formed a part of the ambassadorial suite, whose reception at Selim's court his vivid pen has set so admirably before us, there were no forebodings of the tragedy his time and court were to usher in.

Nearly every writer on Turkish history, life, or manners, will give you this narrative. Yet, since there is none other as vivid, I must perforce, also, give it to you :

So accompanied in this honourable wise, the Embassadors enter the first gate of the Great Turk's Palace. This gate is built of marble in most sumptuous manner, and of a stately height, with certain words of their language in the front thereof, engraven and gilt in marble. So passing through the base court, which hath on the right side very fair gardens, and on the left divers buildings, serving for other offices, with a little Moschy, they come to the second gate, where all such as come in riding must of necessity alight ; here, so soon as they were entered in at this second gate, they came into a very large square court with buildings and galleries round about it, the kitchens standing on the right hand, with other lodgings for such as belonged to the Court, and on the left hand likewise rooms deputed to like services. There are, moreover, many halls and other rooms for resort where they sit in Council, handling and executing the public affairs either of the Court or of the Empire, with other matters where the Bassaes (Pashas) and other officers assemble together. Entering in at this second gate, in one part of the court, which seemed rather some large street, they saw the whole company of the Solaches (Solaks) set in a goodly rank, which are the archers, keeping always near to the prison of the Great Turk, and

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serving as his footmen when he rideth; they use high plumes of feathers, which are set bolt upright over their foreheads. In another place there stood the Capitzi (Kapuji) in array, with black staves of Indian canes in their hands; they are the porters and warders of the gates of the palace, not much differing in their attire from the Janissaries, who stood in rank likewise in another quarter. And besides all these, with many more that were out of order, as well of the Court as of the common people, those knights of the Court which accompanied the Embassadors thither with other great ones likewise of same degree, were marshalled all in their several companies; and among the rest the Mutarachaes (Matrakjis), men of all nations and of all religions (for their valour the only free men which live at their own liberty in the Turkish Empire), stood there apparelled in damask velvet and cloth of gold, and garments of silk of sundry kinds of colours; their pomp was greater, for the turbans that they wore upon their heads being as white as whiteness itself, made a most brave and goodly show well worth the beholding. In brief, whether they were to be considered all at once, or in particular, as well for the order that they kept as for their sumptuous presence, altogether without noise or rumour; they made the ambassadors and the rest of their followers there present, eye-witnesses both of their obedience and of the great state and royalty of the *Othoman* Court. Passing through them the Embassadors were led into the hall where the Bassaes and other great men of the Court were all ready to give them entertainment, they of their train being at the same time brought into a room that stood apart under one of the aforesaid lodgings all hung with Turkey carpets. Soon after (as their use and manner is) they brought in their dinner, covering the ground with tablecloths of a great length spread upon carpets, and afterwards scattering a marvellous number of wooden spoons, with so great store of bread, as if they had been to feed three hundred persons; then they set on

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meat in order, which was served in forty-two great platters of earth full of rice pottage of three or four kinds, differing one from another, some of them seasoned with honey and of the colour of honey ; some with sour milk, and white of colour, and some with sugar ; they had fritters also, which were made of like batter ; and mutton besides, or rather a dainty and toothsome morsel of an old sodden ewe. The table (if there had any such been) thus furnished, the guests without any ceremony of washing sat down on the ground (for stools there were none) and fell to their victual, and drank out of great earthen dishes water prepared with sugar, which kind of drink they call zerbet (sherbet). But so having made a sort of repast, they were no sooner risen up but certain young men whom they call *Grainoglangs* (Ajem-Oghlans), with others that stood round about them, snatched it up hastily as their fees, and like greedy Harpies ravened it down in a moment. The ambassadors in the meantime dined in the hall with the Bassaes. And after dinner certain of the Capitzies were sent for, and twelve of the Embassadors' followers were appointed to do the great Sultan reverence ; by whom (their presents being already conveyed away) they were removed out of the place where they dined and brought on into an under room, from whence there was an ascent into the hall where the Bassaes were staying for the ambassadors, who soon after came forth, and for their ease sat them down upon the benches, whilst the Bassaes went in to *Selymus*, who before this time had made an end of dinner, and was removed in all his royalty into one of his chambers, expecting the coming of the Embassadors. All things now in readiness, and the Embassadors sent for, they set forward with their train, and came to the third gate which leadeth into the Privy Palace of the Turkish Emperor, where none but himself, his eunuchs, and the young pages his minions, being in the eunuch's custody, have continual abiding, into which inward part of the palace none entereth but the Capitzi

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Bassa (Kapuji Bashi) (who hath the keeping of this third gate) and the Asigniers (that serve in the Turk's meat) with the Bassaes and some few other great men, and that only when they have occasion so to do by reason of some great business, or sent for by the Sultan. Being entered in at this gate, which is of a stately and royal building, the Capitzi, by whom they were conducted, suddenly caused them to stay, and set them one from another about five paces in a little room which, nevertheless, was passing delicate, all curiously painted over with divers colours, and stood between the gate and the more inner lodgings, on both sides of which room, when all things were whist and in a deep silence, certain little birds were only heard to warble out their sweet notes, and to flicker up and down the green trees of the gardens (which all along cast a pleasant shadow from them) as if they alone had obtained licence to make a noise. *Selymus* himself was in great majesty sat in an under-chamber, parted only with a wall from a room wherein the Embassadors' followers attended, whereinto he might look through a little window, the portal of his said chamber, standing in counterpart with the third gate above mentioned. The Embassadors entering in, were led single, and one after another, to make their reverence to the Great Turk, and in the meantime certain of the Capitzi, with the presents in their hands, fetching a compass about before the window, mustered them in his sight. All this while not the least sound in the world being raised, but a sacred silence kept in every comer, as if men had been going to visit the holiest place in Jerusalem. Yet for all that the Embassadors' followers, placed one after another (as aforesaid) were not aware that the great Sultan was so near, looking still when they should have been led on forwards all together; howbeit they were set in one after another, neither did they that were so set out return again into the room, but having severally done their reverence, were all (except the ambassadors that still staid in the chamber), by one and one, sent out

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another way into the court ; neither could he that came after see his fellow that went before him after he was once taken in to do his reverence, but suddenly as the former was let out the next was advanced forward to the door where *Izman*, the Capitzi-Bassa and the Odda-Bassa, taking him by both arms and by the neck, the one at the right hand and the other at the left, and so leading him apace by the way softly left his wrists with their hands, lest peradventure he might have some soft weapon in his sleeve. Yet were they all not thus groped as Marc Antonio Pagasetta (the reporter of this negotiation) saith of himself and some others also. However, this hath been, and yet is, the manner of giving of access unto the person of the Great Turk ever since that Amurath the First was, after the battle of Cassova, murdered by one of *Lazarus* the Despot's men, who admitted in his presence in revenge of the wrong done unto his master, with a short poniard that he had closely hidden about him, so stabbed him in the belly that he presently died. And thus like men rather carried to prison by sergeants than to the presence of so mighty a monarch, they were presented unto His Majesty ; he, sitting upon a pallet which the Turks call mastal, used by them in their chambers to sleep and to feed on, covered with carpets of silk, as were the whole floor of the chamber also. The chamber itself, being not very great, was but dark altogether without windows, excepting that one whereof we have before spoken, and having the walls painted and set out in most fresh and lively colours by great cunning, and with a most delicate grace ; yet use they neither pictures nor the image of anything in their paintings. The Visier's Bassaes, before mentioned, were standing at the left hand as they entered in at the chamber door, one by another in one side of the chamber, and the Embassadors on the right hand on the other side standing likewise and uncovered. The Dragomans were in another part of the chamber near the place where the Sultan sat gorgeously attired in a robe of cloth-of-gold all embroidered

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with jewels, when, as the Embassadors' followers by one and one brought before him (as is aforesaid) and kneeling on the ground, a Turk standing on his right hand, with all reverence taking up the hem of his garment, gave it them in their hands to kiss. Selymus himself all this while sitting like an image without moving, and with a great state and majesty keeping his countenance, deigned not to give them one of his looks. This done they were led back again, never turning their backs toward him, but going still backward until they were out of his presence. So after they had all thus made their reverence, and were departed out of the chamber, the Embassadors delivered unto Selynius all the Emperor's letters, and briefly declared unto him their message; whom he, answering in four words as, "that they were to confer with his Bassaes," presently they were dismissed. And so coming out of the two inner gates they mounted on horseback and took the way, leading toward their lodging, being at their return accompanied by the whole order of the Janissaries, with their aga and other captains, among whom were certain of their religious men called *Haagi* (which used to follow the Janissaries) who continually turning about, and in their going, singing, or rather howling out certain psalms and prayers for the welfare of their great Sultan, gave the Embassadors and their followers occasion to wonder, that they either left not for weariness or fell not down like Noddies for giddiness. All these were sent, the more honourably to accompany the Embassadors to their lodging; and beside these, many more on horseback than attended them at their coming forth; in regard whereof the Embassadors, when they came to their lodging, to requite their greedie courtesie, frankly distributed amongst them four thousand dollars, and yet well contented them not.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the manners and customs of those greater days, when Sultans, conscious of being one of the

<sup>1</sup> Knolles, i. 563-4.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

world powers of their time, affected the contemptuous manners of a semi-barbaric, ruling race. This disdain was naturally strongest in the weaker rulers.

The changes wrought in three hundred years, in Turkish manners as well as in their taste, was sufficiently emphasised by a certain scene set within the marble kiosk of Sultan Medjid, at the close of our own long day.

Within the luxuriously comfortable European salon of this summer palace, we had been glad to rest. It was a relief to have no more demanded of eye, or of tongue. It was good to be still, to feel the pleasant peace about one of a cool marble interior, of wide, French windows opening upon wider terraces, to have no more urgent necessities than to follow out beyond the open windows the limpid blues, as they turned to purple upon the dimpled sea surface.

Noiselessly, certain palace attendants had entered the salon. At a word from the head keeper, the group parted, to pass to each of us in turn coffee in gold filigree coffee cups, sweetmeats that must be eaten with a spoon, and curious tasting cakes that went well with either the aromatic coffee, or the rose-scented ginger preserves. After the refreshments, came the fragrance of the perfumed Turkish cigarette. These and the more masculine cigars were taken to the cool flaggings of the terrace, where the talk ran as wantonly as did the roving eye, from classic topic suggested by the classic sites to the more flippant caustic grazing of modern events.

Beyond and below the terrace, the great prospect

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rolled itself from shining shores and tinted seas to distant mountain outlines. Surely no other outlook can make quite the same appeal to one, as does this that frames so much of the world's history. Homer and Hesiod peopled it with gods and heroes before Alexander the Great came to look, on the plains of Troy, upon the tomb of Achilles. Soldiers of fortune of every nationality since the great Persian's day, have sailed through the Dardanelles to conquer or to die. Rome, so sure of her world, came here to end her Empire. The Sultans, so sure of their pomp and the great state of their rule in their court at Seraglio Point, have left the looking out upon the vast prospect to wandering visitors, and to a company of sad old ladies.

Alone of all the great company of royal ladies that formerly peopled the harem of the Seraglio, do a little circle still keep a kind of phantom court in some of the inner halls and kiosks. The widows of dead or deposed Sultans are sent here to end their aimless lives. Only those who have done with life and with hope, like the doomed spirits of Dante's Inferno,—only these may enter here.

The more enduring elemental fabric of earth, sea, and sky alone remains unchanged. Pageants and courts have come to an end. The ebb and flow of human passion, the hot fevers of love and hate, the fierce rush of fiery-blooded ambition, the dark, the hellish deeds of cruelty and oppression,—these have lipped the shores of time as, season after season, the winter and the summer seas have raged or lisped along the golden

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sands of yonder shore. Yet with an unspent, unworn rapture, does the eastern sunlight pour its glowing rays upon the land and sea. The scenic spectacle beyond the water-line rises as might some spectacular pageant set with studied care. Cities lie below the aerially hung mountain shapes; upon the turquoise seas the translucent outlines of Princes' Islands define themselves like delicate memories of fabled isles, and, that no perfect note of beauty should be missing, the sails and crafts moving from shimmering sea to nearer blue-toned Bosphorus, are the shapes of sails and boats the eyes have chiefly seen pictured in faded prints, such as lie within the pages of antiquated books of travel.

The frame indeed is left. The picture once again is being reset. The irresistible movements of change, of reform, of enlightenment, these new, modern forces are sweeping onward, through the Dardanelles, past the Sea of Marmora, out to the gates of the Black Sea. With the smoky breath of the Orient Express tarnishing the azure of the skies, Seraglio Point was doomed. Europe was knocking at its gates with a force there was no resisting. Sultans must bend before that mighty force as, ages ago, Greek art went down before the conquering Roman. The flight of the Sultans to the shores of the Bosphorus was the first outward recognition of the advent of the new forces, and of the new ideas.

## Chapter XII

### TO TOP-KHANEH

ON the following day the sober brown liveries and gold harnesses of His Majesty's victorias were again in waiting beneath the anaemic foliage of the Concert Hall Gardens, adjoining our hotel. The crowd gathered about the royal vehicle was the typical Pera crowd. There were shabby human beings clad in rags that shone like the dulled glitter of insect-wings; there were soldiers, Moslem gamins,—the latter as solemn at six as they will probably be at sixty,—and creatures tied up in sacks, whose black-masqued faces you divined to be those of women.

There were also two bronze-skinned Khurdish porters. These had come to a halt beside the hotel door-way. Both of the men's strong backs were bent to the level of their waist-belts; for one had a trunk, a portmanteau, two umbrella cases, and a hand bag, on his straw saddle, while the other bore two huge packing cases aloft with an ease it was pitiful to see. The eyes of these men were on a level with our elbows. To see the ambassador's suite safely seated in His Majesty's victorias, to hear the whips snapped, and to know us fairly started on our way, seemed to lighten inexpressibly both the burdens and the faces of these

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beasts of toil. Their flashing smiles followed us as we were swept toward La Grande Rue.

Embassy gardens and the gay European shops were quickly passed. We were presently plunged into the



*A Hamal—A Turkish Porter*

Turkish quarters of the town. Once again, as in Stamboul, the amazing, the stupendous, contrasts of life, of men, buildings, and conditions, were presented in sharp juxtaposition. The guide-books will tell you

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

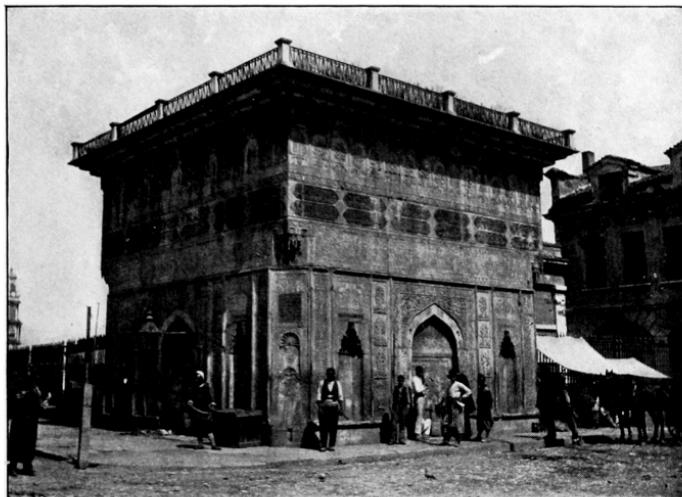
that this street down which we were swept, Yeni Charsi, is a “ broad macadamised street.” In point of macadam, the thoroughfare appeared to have attained that degree of paving perfection as has also a certain locality chiefly celebrated for its unbearable climate. Yeni Charsi, if paved at all, had been paved solely, I should judge, with good intentions.

Our progress down its steep incline at a tremendous speed was one attended with breathless wonder. What springs were these, to resist the wear and tear of such prodigious leaps into mid-air, such percussion into the deep ruts ! What surety of footing had His Majesty’s glossy-skinned steeds, to find thus their unobstructed way amid stones as big as young boulders, in a roadway oozing with mud and slime ! Yet His Majesty’s coachman upon the box appeared to take the road and its difficulties quite as a matter of course. The speed at which he drove his flying steeds was the same, whether threading the maze of traffic in and out of La Grand Rue, or sweeping down upon the tent and booth-crowded thoroughfare of Yeni Charsi.

Booths, portable shops at rest, improvised sheds and tents, — these filled both sides of the streets. Every conceivable order of produce and merchandise was offered for sale within these open shops. Once again were the sickening flavour of raw meats in the open-air butchers’ shops, the sweetish odours of *raki*, perfumes, and odours, — these were mingled with the filth of unwashed streets, with the smells from open sewers, and with the mud and slime of alleys heaped high with offal and refuse.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

These streets, and the ragged, shabby crowd that filled them, might have been a thousand miles away from the more orderly façades—from the brilliantly costumed mass of men that filled the Pera thoroughfares. The lowest scourings of the Levant, we were told,



*Fountain of Top-Khaneb*

peopled this quarter of the town. The statement was proved true by the faces that looked into our own. Turk, Greek, Armenian, Khurd, Syrian, Jew, each and all of these races, like the rags that draped them, seemed to have been inextricably mixed, with but one trait common to the faces of all—that of brutal violence. Scarcely a face but bore the outward mark of a degraded brutality. There were blue-eyed men with scarred cheeks; there were Arabs and negroes with long knife-wounds seaming their bronzed, black, or

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

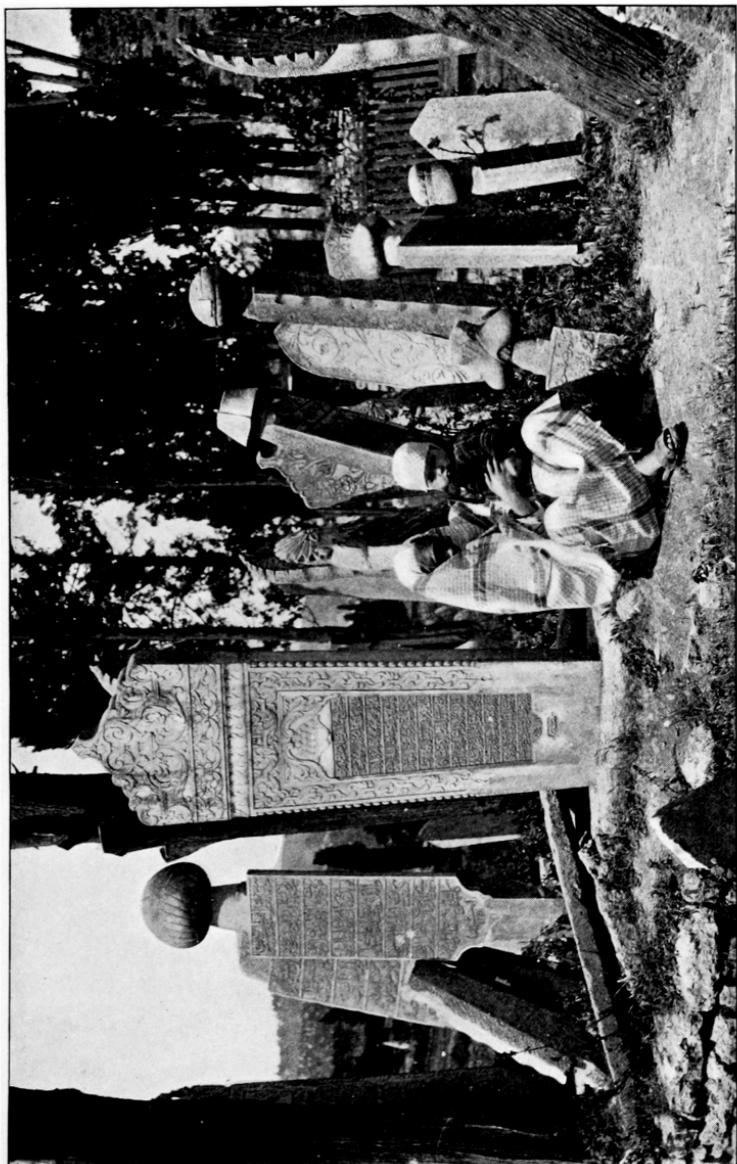
olive-skinned necks and countenances, — wounds and disfigurements that made the benevolent gaze of the mild-browed buffaloes, toiling up the dusty high street, seem human by contrast.

It was good to be driven through such streets swiftly, recklessly. It was better still, suddenly, to emerge upon a wide, open square.

An immense drill ground, set about with mosques, a market-place, a fountain, a cemetery, and a gun-foundry, made a fresh, sensational blending of the old and the new, of Eastern life and of Western inroads.

For the fountain, close to our right, — for this there was time only for a swift review of its beauties. The surprise of as perfect a little building being placed precisely as it was placed, close to a sea wall, and closer still to dun-coloured ware-houses, enhanced, rather than diminished, its effectiveness. Its lovely mellow surfaces, literally covered with lace-like arabesques ; the double rows of Koran verses traced in pale gold on sea-green marble backgrounds ; the niches in which hung, like huge frozen water drops, the Saracenic stalactite decorations ; the horse-shoe and round arches, up to the delicate weeds abloom behind the ornamental wrought-iron railing crowning the projecting cornice, — not a feature of the beautiful building seemed either out of place or lacking in purposeful meaning. About its base a fringe of half-naked Arabs, Turkish and Khurdish “longshoremen,” beggars, mounted horsemen, and asses awaiting their turn at the fountain, proved the attraction of utility united to beauty in a market-place.

*A Turkish Cemetery on the Bosphorus*





## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Suddenly, as we were swept beneath an iron gateway, sounds other than those of street traffic and their harsh cries struck the ear. Guards saluting, rigid as statues, were now the steely music along our way.

Another music came, with the rhythmic fall of hundreds of disciplined feet, beating in measured cadence the difficult feat of the Prussian goose-step. Squads of Turkish soldiers, in whitish-brown drill costumes, were marching and counter-marching across the wide, open square.

A Prussian officer, in tall visaged cap, wearing the uniform of His German Majesty's army, was shouting the commands in strident, peremptory tones.

As we were wheeled past a near squad, all moving as one man, the dark, bright eyes glancing at us sideways were seen to be set in strong-featured, intelligent faces. There was not a dull face nor a weak back among the companies.

"They are the finest troops in Europe." "And the most intelligent," were the admiring comments wrung from Christian soldier lips in this our swift review of this scanty exhibit of the Turkish army at drill.

In this centre of things military, a certain mosque and a türbeh we found quite fittingly placed. Kapitan Pasha, the hero of Lepanto, he who broke through the Christian fleet in 1580, lies buried in a tomb glistening with Persian tiles. The grave fingers of the pointed cypresses seemed waving about the türbeh a mute salute, as the verses of the Koran appeared also to be breathing from mosque and fountain to

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the sweating soldiers, broiling in the noon sun, the reward promised those who fall in battle. On earth, the Prussian goose-step ; in heaven, a paradise of houris ! Who is it that can maintain, in the teeth of such a realistic demonstration, that Turkey is not progressive ?

Surely of all founders of religions, Mahomet best understood the nature of the common Oriental soldier. He gave him, as the reward of his earthly drill and an heroic death on the field of battle, the sort of heaven he could comprehend as a heaven worth fighting, worth dying, for. After the attainment of the skill and bravery necessary for the cutting down of innumerable *Giaours*, in the heat of battle, if one be lucky, there follows the being slashed into ribbons one's self. In Paradise five minutes later, and behold ! *Al Jannat !* “the garden” is reached. There, in pavilions of hollow pearls lie, awaiting the hero, the dark-eyed Hun-al-ayun, ravishing creatures not made of mortal clay, but of pure musk. For the capacity perpetually to enjoy such — for to each man is promised the vigour of an hundred men — who would count the trifling seconds of time we name and magnify as three score years and ten ? Assuredly not a single Moslem soldier !

Another day, when there will be more hours to the day, I shall find myself following in the footsteps of some two or three of these splendid, bronzed fellows. In Stamboul, across the water, barracks and mosques were even thicker strewn than they were close to the walls and heart of Yildiz Palace. At the mosque

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

fountains I shall see soldiers in couples, in groups, gravely taking off their thick shoes. Stockings will then as quickly be slipped off and as quickly replaced. After the required sacred ablutions the thick shoes will be replaced, to be worn as far as the door of the mosque. Then, in the narthex, once more the soldier will take these latter off. He will pass the slipper-lender by with a fine indifferent air. He need owe him nothing. For with his shoes in his hand, and in his stockinged feet, he is entirely fit to enter the mighty presence of his Maker. As he sits on his feet, as he bows, as he prays, his soul is uplifted. God seems very near, and Mahomet, his Prophet, is nearer still. Every word of the Moslem ritual or prayer that the soldier breathes, he believes. Every single promise made by Allah, the One God, to Mahomet, his only Prophet, he knows to be as true, as certain, as is the fact of his own existence.

It is in this simple, sublime faith that the secret of the strength of the Turkish army is to be found. So long as the Turkish soldier continues to pray, he will remain the best fighting animal in Europe. As long as he is fed, housed, and clothed, he remains, also, magnificently indifferent to the more sordid detail of his monthly pay.

All he asks of his Sultan is the opportunity to fight. Of God, he has but one prayer: that he may die after killing the requisite number of *Giaours* — for *Al Jannat* cannot then be far away.

## Chapter XIII

### IN THE ROYAL CAÏQUES

FROM the music of rustling muskets we had turned to hear the cries of barbaric-featured men. The cries came from twenty oarsmen. These were holding close to the wet stones of the landing quais, two long and wondrously beautiful boats. Each of these boats, as it tiptoed airily upon the waters, bore its living cargo as lightly as though it had been made of cork.

As we moved toward the boats, a sudden silence fell upon the men. Their strange dialect,—smooth of sound and yet full of savage, primitive cries and calls—this new tongue that had filled the air with a clamorous babble, was replaced by the mute, expressive language of the Eastern salaam. Forty fingers swept from bright scarlet belts to bared breasts, from hairy breasts to bronzed lips, from lips to fez-capped foreheads. Then the figures, in their tidy duck suits and bright sashes, were each as rigid as marble.

A moment later, and the ten great oars of our own caïque were furrowing the blue waters.

Were we floating, swimming, or flying? The boat swept the waters as a bird moves through the fields of space. Effort, on the part of our oarsmen, there

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

seemed none. They were plying the mighty oars as mimic oarsmen ply their blades in mimic water on a mimic stage.

Imagine the gondola without its hood, no longer wearing its sable weeds, but aglow with colour ; for the classic triremes of Greece with their three banks of galley-slaves have but a single rank of oarsmen ; place carven friezes pricked with gold along sides and poop ends ; lay over the dark-toned woods sumptuous cushions and purple cloths, and then, possibly, you may figure to your mind the beauty and finish of the Sultan's caique.

The oars, in themselves, were of curious make. They were long, their ends were moon-curved ; their tops were ballasted with cylindrical bulb-shaped handles. Close to Top-Khaneh lay the shops for the making of these antique oars, where they are still fashioned with rude, primitive instruments.

The faces of the men before us had the right Eastern look. They were of several ages and many colours. The eyes were those of the wondrous Orient, deep, lustrous, burning. The nudity of the bared legs, arms, and open breasts, was the sign of an unclaimed, barbaric savagery. The white duck suits—suits of very abbreviated trousers and loose, open jackets—were felt to be an anomaly, cool and tidy though they were to the eye. Clad in flowing Eastern garments, the rude features, swarthy skins, large sinewy frames, and sombre eyes would have been superbly picturesque. Alone, the scarlet belts and crimson fezes made the looked-for Eastern notes of colour.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

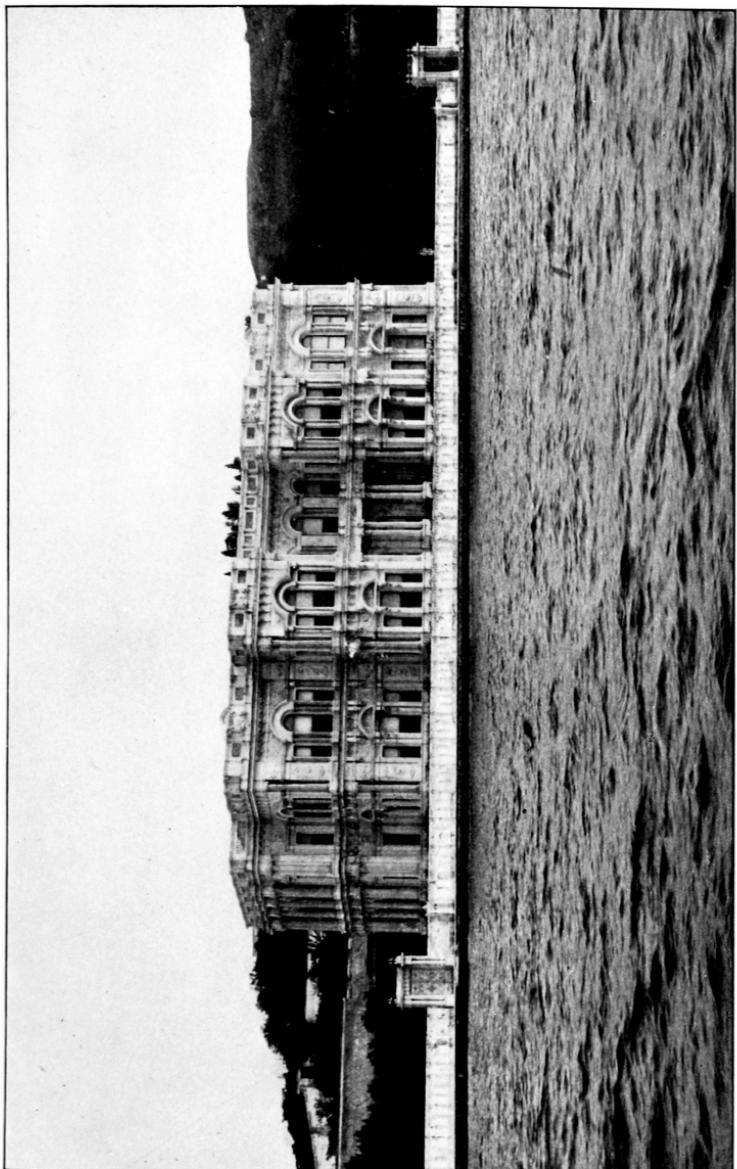
The stroke was obviously a veteran. He had been nearly half a century in the Imperial Service. "He must be seventy, yes, quite seventy, perhaps more, one can never tell the age of these men, but he is as strong as the youngest," was Mustafa Bey's comment on the ribbed and wrinkled face that bent before us.

"The youngest" was the beauty of the boat's crew. Dark as a Saracen, his complexion of the same lustrous commingling of brown tints and carnation, the eyes were deep set, rich as the satin of the walnut in colour. The youth's firm, purely cut brows made but one line with the perfect nose. His scarlet lips were the lips of an Antinous. The body matched face and head. No more perfect grace of limb or suppleness of moving muscle was conceivable. In watching the youth, a lost period of beauty seemed re-captured. All the lovely trains of dancing fauns, of nimble tripping athletes, of grave young gods, seemed to have found in this one perfect shape their moment of re-incarnation.

"From Asia Minor, Excellency, yes, it is from Asia Minor they come — these boatmen. They are Anatolian Greeks. They go home once, yes, perhaps twice a year. Once in His Majesty's service they rarely leave."

The young Greek, then, had the double heritage of his great ancestors ; to him had descended their god-like beauty and their inborn sailor's command of the oar.

The high clear voice of our bow was now ringing across the water, "Clear the way!" A sky-blue fisherman's boat close to our gunwales was soon scudding away to the left.



*The Palace of Beylerbey*



## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

“Clear the way!”

A flotilla of seedy, down-at-heels caïques parted, swept deftly to right and to left, to make way for His Majesty’s boats.

Once more the cry, “Clear the way!” filled the air. A lateen-rigged yawl turned to windward. A smart yacht, as it dipped its colours in salute, gave us a wide berth. A *barcas* with bright awnings, beneath whose shade four or five brilliantly clad shapes huddled close, crossed our bows with frightened, scurrying speed.

A long marble quai, clean and white, with a gleaming, marble palace set below green terraces, presently rose above our gunwales. There was a short, quick word from our bow. The ten great oars were deftly lifted and as skilfully brought to rest. Simultaneously each one of the ten oarsmen sought the recesses of his waist belt, producing therefrom ten coarse, but brilliantly coloured handkerchiefs. The men then proceeded to mop their brows with great thoroughness and finish.

The instant of our landing a gate between the glistening marble walls was swung open.

As we passed within the garden enclosure two or more palace attendants made their appearance. In their long, black coats, closely buttoned — a sort of civic uniform that made them look half groom, half cleric, — these servants of His Majesty gave a solemn aspect to the otherwise gay notes struck by the snowy walls, by the golden-tinted gates, by the brilliant flowery garden-beds, and by the pearl of a palace that was set within walls and gardens.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

It would be impossible to imagine a more festal structure than the Palace of Beylerbey. Its marbles are set so close to the water's edge, they seem a part of the bright surface. For summer and gladness, for delicate moonlight raptures, for music and poetry and dances, it is surely solely for such delights as these Beylerbey was built. Whoever the architect, he was assuredly a true poet. He must have looked at the green hills behind, and have said, "Behold! my palace shall not shame them!" Beneath the hills the lines of his structure rise simple, pure, and strong. He must have looked, also, at the rippling water, and said, "Their brightness shall not be shadowed!" for walls, kiosks, gateways, and palace surface glistened as white as a bride's robe. In the golden lattices of the kiosk windows, in the carved parapet of his roof edge, he seemed to have netted the sunbeams he saw webbed across the moving blue.

Arches upon arches,—simple pillars, foliaged, rippled with webbed carvings,—arcaded windows, recessed porticoes, and, along the water's edge, kiosks, the roofs of which lay crinkled beneath the sun like leaves unfolding,—touches of gold in these, touches of gold along the long interminable water walls, and, for all the rest, pure glistening marbles that were set against the living frame of green hills and blossoming terraces,—wherever the eye strayed or rested, it was to see a perfect palace splendidly set. Symmetry, simplicity, colour, proportion — all the standards of architectural laws and requirements have been triumphantly met by this builder of Beylerbey.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

A short flight of steps led us into an entrance hall. There were more marble steps within, then the main hall was reached. It was here enchantment began; for the hall, like the palace exterior, seemed to have captured the festal secret. Four monster crystal candelabra stood in the middle of the great room. Their huge prisms and pendants were emeralds, topazes, and amethysts, in glass. This prismatic shower of light seemed to set the keynote of festivity for the whole of the room. Its decorated walls and tessellated floors, its myriad faucetted fire-places, and its bright furnishings repeated this gay note. Once more one said to one's self, "It is a hall made for gauze draperies, for the lighting of delicate flesh tints, for fluttering scarves and for the music of tripping footsteps." And, save for our voices, the great hall was as silent as a tomb.

Presently we were led onward into the state chambers. Along the water front one luxuriously upholstered room followed another. Eastern embroideries covered silken curtains and chair coverings. The looms of the East had furnished the silk and satins. It was Eastern fingers, also, that had cunningly worked Oriental patterns and designs on the superb satin and brocaded surfaces; but it was Paris, it was Parisian models that had inspired the hanging of the gorgeous draperies, as well as the cut and shape of chairs and tables.

For ornaments there were innumerable clocks, and a few, lamentably few, porcelain vases. The charming bric-a-brac ornaments, the thousand and one bibelots,

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the works of art in bronze or marble or terra-cotta, the pictures, sketches, drawings, that make a French salon or an American drawing-room both a home and a museum, of all such adornments these rooms were as destitute as a soldier's barrack. Alone in a single remote room—small and almost cosily upholstered—hung a few Scherers, Fromentins, and a Delacroix. Sultan Abdul Aziz had brought from Paris a taste for French art. He had violated all Moslem traditions in this display of his taste.

The marble baths and the cooling rooms were felt to be more distinctly Eastern. These luxurious interiors, small, dainty, complete, with their radiant marbles, coloured glass domes, low divans, and horse-shoe arched little tables again stirred the imagination. One could seem to see phantasmal, gracious forms flitting thither for the cool of the bath. The satin of white Circassian skins could have been no whiter than was the milk of the marbled walls ; henna-tipped fingers would have had at close hand the scented cigarette, for the couches and tables were still cosily set side by side, as if awaiting the coming of the Sultan's favourite.

The true decoration of these great rooms lay in the glittering, moving water-world beyond the window ledges, and in the terraces and gardens above and below them. The blue waters of the Bosphorus seemed fairly tumbling into the great interiors, so closely set over the river surface was the palace. Wherever one looked it was to see water moving, glistening, glittering. Tall ships were to be seen rid-

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

ing by between the satin of curtains. Forests of masts were set between the spirals of a minaret, shining from across the opposite shore, and the nearer needles of a towering fir tree. Roses, palms, and strange-leaved plants bloomed and leaved, as it were, within finger-range. Never, surely, had a summer palace captured and framed as successfully the green and blue world of water and bloom set beyond its window ledges.

In one of the lower stories was a room none but an Eastern potentate would have built. The chamber was as vast as was the upper main hall. It was cool, dark, and airy. In the very middle of the great room was a huge marble fountain. The innumerable pillars supporting the roof gave to this fountain retreat the look of a mysterious, subterranean promenade. The fountain "was for fish — Sultan Abdul Aziz was fond of animals," we were told. For the enjoyment of looking upon fish swimming in water, why all this care taken to have the fountain in so secret and remote a place? The pillars through which, in warm days, one might imagine one's self wandering as through a cool forest, this deep and beautiful fountain, was it indeed only the shining of fishy scales the Sultan saw as he looked? It was a room to make one ponder.

Beylerbey has had its history, as have most of the palaces upon the Bosphorus. On its completion, with its occupancy by Sultan Abdul Aziz, a change came over the face of Turkish life. Beylerbey may be said to stand as the signpost at the crossroad of modern Turkish history. Another writing has gone

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

into its lines and curves and traceried capitals than that seen by the casual eye. Its tables and chairs, even its curtain hangings, will tell you a story as eventful and tragic,—as to what the introduction of these Parisian models stand for, and that to which their choice led,—as any in all the moving tragedies of the world's history.

Alone of all the Sultans since the days of Mahomet the Conqueror, Abdul Aziz had the courage to turn traveller. As conquerors, fighters, warriors, Sultans had travelled from Persia to Austria, from Egypt to Hungary. In glancing splendour, the travelling impedimenta of their gold-tipped tent pinnacles had swept, for centuries, half Europe. But to travel for travel's sake, to see, not to conquer, the world,—this was a new madness come upon the mind of the Son of the Faithful.

To deliberate upon Sultan Abdul Aziz's avowed intention of breaking with the old sacred traditions, a great council of ministers, lay and ecclesiastical, was assembled in the year 1867. The clerical party felt the coming departure of the sovereign to be fraught with tragic consequences both to the state and to Islamism. Behind the priests and the mollahs were grouped the powers of the harem, the Sultan's favourite wives, and his mother, the Valideh-Sultan. Women and priests stood together then, as they always stand, arrayed in their armour of conservatism, draped in superstition, and brandishing the spear of prophecy, for the foe of the weak is everywhere the new, the adventurous, and the untried.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Abdul Aziz, whose beneficent reign of six short years had made him the idol of his people, had the courage to oppose his will to the priests, to his harem, and to the older conservative party. He listened to his own impulse, for behind that impulse he felt the hot pulse of the younger, newly awakened Turkish party beating in response to his own more modern ambitions.

The Sultan set forth, therefore, on his long journey. In the summer of 1867, the first of all his race, he turned traveller. It is from that date that the division is said to have become distinctly marked between the Old and the Young Turkey Party.

What hopes, fears, desires, and wild dreams of change, of reform, and of a new dispensation, hung upon the results of the Sultan's journey ! The old conservative party trembled lest a change should be brought about, detrimental alike to Turkish progress and Turkish interests. The more fanatical mollahs, behind whom shivered with fear the favourites of the harem, looked for nothing less than a veritable whirlwind, one which should destroy utterly both state and religion.

In the bosoms of the younger, more modernised Turks there leapt the quiver of hope, that, possibly with the return of their beloved and courageous Sultan, a new dawn would illumine their land. With eyes fresh from the achievements of modern Europe, Abdul Aziz must see, as they thought, the path of progress along which Turkey must be led, if she was to keep her place before the nations of the world.

With the return of their Sultan from his foreign adventures Turkey was to learn that Abdul Aziz was

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

as conservative a traveller as he had proved himself heroic in his setting forth upon his journey.

After a review of the countries and courts of France, England, and Austria, he returned to announce to his subjects that in them he found a people far in advance of all others in point of civilisation. Two objects, one of them no object, indeed, but a being most distinctly, humanely alive, he had discovered in all his wanderings as worthy of rapturous admiration. In the lovely Empress of the French, in Eugénie, this connoisseur of women had found the most beautiful of women. In the review of England's fleet, the Turkish ruler and owner of the ports of the Black Sea and the Dardanelles had seen the perfect, the ideal fleet.

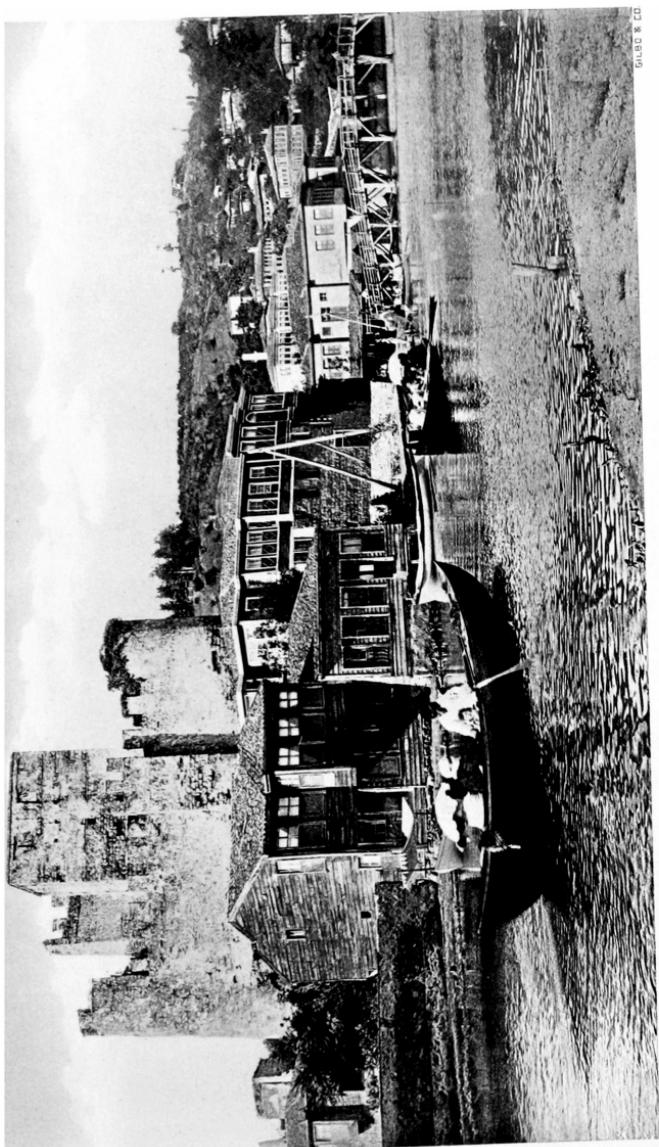
On his oath as Sultan, he vowed, it is said, to find a woman for his wife as lovely as Eugénie, and to construct a navy equal to England's.

Beylerbey was but recently finished. It served as the idyllic retreat for the Sultan's honeymoon, for in a Circassian slave named Mihri, his difficult eye had discerned the model of beauty his Europeanised taste coveted.

Henceforth the favourite Mihri was to play as important a rôle in the history of Turkish finance as had the unfortunate Empress of the French with the politics of France. Dolma Baghcheh, across the water, splendid as it was, was not splendid enough. Beylerbey was pronounced to be but a costly toy. The Palace of Tcheragan was begun, to prove that the budget of the already exhausted treasury could be made to



*Turkish Houses near Anadoli Hissar — The Bosphorus*





## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

bleed millions, when millions must be had for the jewelled palace of a favourite wife.

Into the ports of Mitylene, within this present year, there steamed a portion of the French fleet. They had come to enforce, at the points of their great guns, the payment to certain French merchants, among others more important, of certain costly “articles de Paris.” Three thousand and odd francs figured as one of the items for a single pair of stockings, the gift, it is said, of the doting Sultan Abdul Aziz to his beloved Mihri.

To add to the burden of the overtaxed people, the visit to Constantinople of the thronéd lady of the French came, the year following this Sultan’s visit to the French capital, to swell Turkish debts and further to impoverish the poor.

When Eugénie arrived, in 1869, she was to find Beylerbey turned into a French palace. The very hangings of her room in the Tuileries had been copied. Balls, fêtes, illuminations, festivities, turned Constantinople and the palaces upon the Bosphorus into one vast pleasure ground, over whose tournament of beauty jousting splendour she was queen.

Some years later the wealth squandered upon the two women his wearied eyes had gloried in, brought, together with his many other extravagances, a tragic ending to fêtes and festivals.

The great act of this tragedy was set in the splendid *mise-en-scène* of the Palace of Dolma Baghcheh.

## Chapter XIV

### A TURKISH COUP D'ÉTAT

THE Palace of Dolma Baghcheh stood on the opposite, the European side, of the Bosphorus. Once more, therefore, we found the brown and gold caïques tossing beneath wet marble quais. As we entered the boats the sombre group of palace attendants, clustered within the gates, again seemed to put into mourning the fairy gardens, the glistening walls, and the shining palace.

As we were swept amid-stream the gilded gates were closed with a click. The enchanted palace was locked, tight and fast. Silent, deserted, tenantless, its empty chambers would wait on and on, for whom? for what royal guest? for what new page in the marvellous book of Turkish history?

“Turkish history!” The words held me spell-bound. Above all the gathering beauty of the brilliant scene about, above, beyond us; stronger than the witchery of colour and Eastern life abroad upon the fluid turquoise stream; more compellingly insistent than the stir and rush of crafts moving across the waters, did the tragic story of the Sultan, inseparably

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

associated with Beylerbey, pursue me, pull me, haunt me. To lay its ghost, there was but one way. I must piece out the story bit by bit. Here it is:

In the long stretch of thirteen centuries, Khalifs and Sultans had come to strange and mysterious ends. If the imperial harem has been the walled prison of



*The Palace and Mosque of Dolma Baghcheh*

thousands upon thousands of beauties, whose loveliness was to flower and ripen solely for a single monarch's eye, the harem isolation and seclusion has also offered the seal of a mysterious silence upon many a ghastly deed. Sultans, as well as their treacherous or intriguing wives, have gone smiling to harem alcoves, to smile on still, in distort grimace, as poison, or the supple fingers of African eunuchs, did their hideous work.

It was from the harem of Dolma Baghcheh — the great palace yonder — that Sultan Abdul Aziz was to

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

come forth on a certain eventful midnight, startled, outraged,—in a fury of Jovian anger.

In the pitiful scantiness of night raiment, this Sultan was to confront neither the dagger-thrust, nor was he even politely to be shown the bowstring. A new instrument of torture, the unheard-of, unprecedented act of his own deposition, was to be courteously, tragically tendered him.

This Turkish coup d'état, considering it was a first and unique performance, was enacted in a masterly manner. All the greater qualities of the Turks, their long-sung bravery, their heroism and patriotism, were brilliantly displayed. Their high capacity, also, for quick and effective unity and action, in a perilous crisis, was conspicuously manifested.

This act of revolt among the Sultan's ministers and certain other high religious and military officers, had been induced by a long chapter of civic and political disasters. These disasters had culminated in a grave financial crisis. Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro,—each of these vassal states had won their virtual freedom, after long and bloody years of wars. Internal disorder had succeeded the loss of territory.

The extravagances and extortions of the Sultan had surpassed the limit of even Turkish submission. Six thousand servants and petty officials are not kept, even in an Imperial palace, for nothing. Three hundred cooks, four hundred grooms, four hundred boatmen, four hundred musicians, special and particular attendants, each with his recognised perquisites—to attend to His Majesty's pipe, to his coffee, to his

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wardrobe, and to the perfumes of his morning bath — such an army of menials make a monarch's people sweat. “Somebody must see to the Imperial back-gammon board, another to the august chin ; £16,000 a year must be spent on sugar” ; for such absolute necessities as these, in a court and palace that considered its budget of expenses “reformed” to a pitiable degree of economy, since the “grand days” of the mediæval splendour of the Ottoman Court — for such meagre, palatial necessities surely loyal courtiers and a loving people should gladly toil, should consent to be taxed and despoiled till utmost labour could not be made to yield the barest living.

What are a loyal people born for, if not to support their king and ruler? “The Shadow of God” cannot be expected to work. Somebody must pay for *his* being born, as well as for his condescending to rule and to govern ; for his tastes and his passions, and for his few — his lamentably few — luxuries, just a matter of twelve hundred odalisks in a harem, a mere handful compared to the lovely army that had crowded the harems of his ancestors. Ah me! the good, the grand, the royally sensuous days of old ! — just six hundred horses in his stables, no more, and only one hundred and fifty coachmen and footmen ; surely for the furnishing of such a pitiful array of Imperial tastes, and of passions curbed to the requirements of modern economical restraint, a people numbering eighteen millions of subjects ought to find easy ways and lavish means !

Yet, economise as he would, Sultan Abdul Aziz

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found himself, year after year, deeper and deeper in debt. In his private expenditure alone he was always three quarters of a million behindhand. A critical, European-trained taste for pictures and jewels made jewels and pictures come, it was true, to a pretty figure. The pretty figure touched a quarter of a million per annum. The acquirements of such tastes came, however, as the reward of travel, and of enlarged views.

The Young Turkey party,—the more advanced ministers who had urged His Majesty's setting forth on his European travels—surely these among his court and people at least would understand, would glory, even, in their ruler's growth in educated taste and in æsthetic development.

Such is the inconsistency of human nature, it was this very party, the so-called Young Turkey, that deposed him. It was neither that he should acquire a taste for foreign pictures and cut gems ; nor yet was it that he might bring back a preference for Parisian ways of hanging curtains and draping bedchambers ; nor was it that he should learn the secret of giving splendid balls *à la cour de Napoléon III* in newly built Turco-Franco palaces, that either ministers or the revolutionary youth of Turkey had advocated the going forth of their sovereign to European capitals. Not one among either these younger or older Turkish innovators had imagined a long and expensive journey by land and sea, would have, for its most conspicuous result, the search after and the finding of Mihri, of a Circassian slave ! Or that, the right, perfected pattern

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of a Circassian once found, she would presently be worshipped as if she were really, fully a human being, as indeed might one who had a soul, whose longings and desires were to be respected and gratified. That this worship of and deference for a mere woman should be tendered by their travelled, their presumably exceptionally enlightened Sultan, in the name of Allah and of his Prophet!—who could have foreseen such a monstrous absurdity? Assuredly not one among his ministers, not even one among the thousands of young, eager conspirators calling themselves the Young Turkey Party. Yet was every man among them thoroughly harem broken!

State councils are not always composed of reasoning men, gifted with insight into the relation between cause and effect. In the state councils sitting solemnly in the mysterious chambers of the Sublime Porte, in that year, there were several factions, two of which alone had a definite plan. The Grand Vizier Mahmoud had his work quite perfectly laid before him. Russia stood behind him, directing every snip of the Grand Vizieral political shears. To oppose every act or effort which could help or aid the Young Turkey Party, this was the order from Russia. This latter party was young chiefly in name. Its leaders were young in their hopes, yet were they wise with the wisdom of experience, and armed with a caution as remarkable as was their prudence brilliantly directed. The ministers, Midhat, Hussein Avri, and Redif Pasha made a formidable triumvirate. These felt, they knew themselves to be infinitely stronger than any Grand Vizier, even though

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he had the strength of all the Russias behind him. For the ministers and their faction had the strongest power in Turkey as their bulwark. The mollahs and the priests were with them. A strange union,—that of a band of revolutionaries and the Sect,—wedded above all others to creeds and traditions. The union had been brought about by even stranger causes.

Once the pact made, action, and instantaneous action, was determined upon. European methods were to be resorted to. Others besides their misguided ruler might copy French and English fashions.

It was decided to depose the Sultan !

So courageous, startling, unheard-of an act on the part of loyal, patient, submissive Turks ! Surely the mere inception of so stupendous a plan must have made the brains of the conspirators reel with self-wonder.

The leaders of this most daring of all the political upheavals ever planned in Turkey were, however, as cool and collected as they were united in mind and purpose.

The Moslem law required the signature of the Sheikh-ul-Islâm, head priest of Islam, for the deposition of a sovereign. The following letter was therefore addressed to Hairoullah Effendi :—

When a Sultan dissipates the finances, and ruins his people to provide for his own amusements, without care or thought of the good of his people, can he be deposed ?

When a Sultan becomes incapable of guiding his Kingdom by reason of deficient intellectual capacity, can he be deposed ?

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The following was the answer :—

With the help of Allah, 29 May, 1293 of the Hegira.

Yes, a Sultan can be deposed if he ruins his country by his obstinacy and his foolish expenditures, for a Sultan must be the father of his people and not their tyrant. May Allah forgive him. He alone is great and merciful.

(Signed) HAIROULLAH.

Armed with this religious sanction, the ministers lost not a moment in the performance of their stupendously daring act. An instant's hesitation or delay might mean the massacre of thousands of patriots.

The first stroke of the conspirators was a masterpiece of finesse. The Imperial Guard, devoted body and soul to the Sultan, must first of all be captured. Captured they were. Two men-of-war lay at anchor in the Golden Horn. These were ordered to light their fires and come to anchor below the arsenal, close to Top-Khaneh. Their commander was furnished with sealed orders not to be opened until he found himself twenty miles at sea.

Meanwhile the Minister of War had sent to the general of the Imperial Guard an order to ship his troops immediately aboard of these men-of-war. The trick worked to perfection. The Sultan's body-guard could not get aboard quickly enough since their general believed himself called upon to execute as quickly as possible an Imperial mandate !

From the windows of Dolma Baghcheh, meanwhile, there looked forth into the night, at first idly, then wonderingly, and finally startled to fearstruck amaze-

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ment, a keen pair of eyes. The eyes belonged to none other than the Sultan. Among the pillows of a divan placed close to the windows of the palace, Abdul Aziz had been idling away a few after-dinner moments. His quick eye, as it swept the familiar lights gleaming amid the darkness, upon and across the Bosphorus, had discerned the sailing forth from below the arsenal, of two of his own men-of-war ! Yet no Imperial *Irade* (order) had been given !

Abdul Aziz was not as wholly wanting in those capacities for governing which his ministers had so complacently signed away into desuetude. On the wings of the wind he sniffed treason. Furious, yet inwardly trembling, he despatched an aide-de-camp in hottest haste to the Minister of War. The latter must come, and at once, to the palace.

The sovereign's aide-de-camp, flying across Galata, across the silent Stamboul streets, up to the lighted chambers of the Seraskerat, was the precipitant that resolved the waiting daring of the conspirators into instant action. The coup d'état that was to have been enacted on the morrow, in full daylight, must be consummated there and then, in the dark fastnesses of the night ! A traitor might, perhaps, have sold the great secret ! Who could tell ? Otherwise how came the Sultan to know of the going to sea of the men-of-war ? There was not an instant of time to be lost.

The Imperial aide-de-camp was given some plausible answer. He was despatched to the palace and to his waiting master, as speedily as possible.

In their turn, and even more quickly, the little body

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of ministers, followed by a company of sure and tried officers and their soldiers, made their way to the palace. Besides the precious edict of Hairoullah Effendi, the high priest, each one of these men knew he was carrying his life, and that of thousands of others, in his hand.



*The Seraskerat*

The road from the Seraskerat to the arsenal, and from the arsenal to Dolma Baghcheh in full daylight, is not short. Stamboul, the Long Bridge, the Galata quais, the Barrack heights, and then, finally, the downward descent to the palace—the journey is a long one. Midnight made it no shorter. At the arsenal there was a most unpleasant stratagem to be worked—the substitution of the companies of soldiers in league with the revolutionary pashas for those doing

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duty, loyally, to their ruler. The plan of this substitution worked as perfectly as had the removal of the Imperial Guard.

Once the conspirators had gained the palace portals the great act of the tragic night began in earnest. At the golden green and white gates there was a sentinel to pass. A pistol at his throat turned the "Qui vive" into a throttled silence. The windows of the palace were as dark as night. All within, apparently, were asleep or were appearing to sleep. At each one of the palace doors the pistol act was repeated, with the same silencing effect. His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, was well guarded, but the pistol of conspirators, handled by state ministers, had not been anticipated as a palace danger.

The minister who had been chosen to conduct, almost single-handed, the greatest of all the acts of this brilliant revolutionary scene, was Redif Pasha. His courage, in moments of peril, was known to be surpassed only by his calm. Followed solely by three armed officers, Redif Pasha led the way onwards, past halls and chambers to the salon of the eunuchs. The door of this room he opened with a pass-key.

The black men, startled from their first heavy sleep, sprang almost automatically, nevertheless, to their feet, their hands upon their drawn swords. With imperceptible calm Redif Pasha informed the savage house guard he had come on a matter of utmost state importance; he must speak, and at once, to His Imperial Majesty.

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The chief eunuch, hastily summoned, replied his own head would be forfeit, were he to deliver any such message. Redif Pasha's quiet answer was, he himself would follow him, and to the Imperial alcove, did he not proceed, and quickly, to obey the command. This threat decided the awe-struck eunuch. The torch that was flaring feebly, in his trembling hands, all but fell from his terror-stricken grasp. From the slaves who had rescued the falling torch, Redif Pasha silently took the flaming stick. With the calm of one quite at home, performing mechanically a simple, homely act, the minister proceeded to light the many lustres within the palace chamber. An instant later, and what a scene the hundreds of lights played upon!

Within the threshold of the door stood the Sultan scantily clad, dishevelled, his face as terrible as it was pallid with apprehensive fear. Grovelling almost at his feet, gallantly placing themselves between their master's sacred presence and the intrusive minister and his military escort, the group of terrorised eunuchs had swept. Their bronzed faces were bronze no longer; their dark skins were streaked with white. And for the setting of this dramatic scene there was the gaily upholstered, gorgeously decorated palace chamber.

In a voice terrible to hear, the Sultan demanded an explanation of the minister's appearance, at such an hour, with as daring and imperious a front of insistence.

Bowing profoundly, Redif Pasha, with a perfect courtesy, assured His Majesty he had only dared thus

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to intrude, and at such a moment, in order that he might himself have the honour of presenting to His Majesty the following missive from his nephew.

The letter tendered the Sultan by Redif Pasha was signed "Mourad." In it the latter announced, most courteously, yet firmly, his own accession to the Turkish throne!

"Since when has there been another sovereign than me in Turkey?" cried Abdul Aziz, in an access of uncontrollable rage, after reading the document.

"Since, Sire, the people have shaken off the yoke of tyranny. Since the clergy have denied their Lord. Since other nations have abandoned their ally, and since the army no longer obey their King. Since this same night in which Turkey has proclaimed Mourad for its Sultan, King, and Ruler!"

Without ceasing to smile, with quiet yet dramatic gesture, Redif Pasha lifted the curtain draping the window. Below, dressed in line, stood the massed troops, waiting to salute their new sovereign.

Scarcely had the Imperial back been turned on that convincing spectacle, when a great cry rose up. In shrill crescendo, its echoing accents pierced the ear. The rush and flutter of a moving form followed the cry. Mihri—distractingly beautiful in the enveloping mists of her hastily adjusted veils and mantle—stood, in her turn, within the doors. For a single breathless instant her fluttering garments and her piercing shrieks were stilled. With a wide, wild glance, her great eyes swept the room, and the scene within it. Then, with a sudden passionate bound,

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she had flung herself at the feet of the King — of the King she had ruined.

“Sire,” she sobbed, “we are lost!”

Lost indeed were both.

Five short days after this tragic midnight, Shakespearean in its dramatic completeness, the sad-eyed Mihri and her royal lover were seated side by side in one of the lovely kiosks of the Palace of Tcheragan. It was in this palace, that had cost him so dear, the deposed Sultan had asked permission to pass the time of his virtual imprisonment. For already, installed as Sultan, in yonder Dolma Baghcheh, his nephew Mourad, reigning over a happy, hoping people, held his uncle's fate in his young hands.

The two state prisoners were mournfully reviewing their sorrows and disasters. Soon the Valideh-Sultan, the former Sultan's mother, joined them. After a brief talk, Abdul Aziz suddenly asked his wife for a pair of scissors. To trim his beard, he said, smiling sadly, would distract him.

The two women rose, after presenting their master with the asked-for objects. Together they moved slowly toward the harem.

Loud cries, shrieks for help, and the sounds of a scuffle chained their feet, for an instant of wondering anguish, spellbound. On their reaching the kiosk, it was to find Abdul Aziz bleeding to death. He had severed the arteries of both arms and wrists. Such, at least, was the statement wrung from the lips of the attendant left beside His Majesty, as the two women had turned away. The veracity of this statement, confirmed

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under torture, is denied, as will every one of the foregoing facts be also denied, contested, and disproved by every narrator of this dramatic story.

Those who know, say nothing. That is an epitome of all the facts, stories, tragedies, and conspiracies that take place or have taken place in this land of closed lips.

## Chapter XV

### A CHAIN OF ROYAL PALACES

“IT is the Palace of Tcheragan,” murmured Mustafa Bey.

As we had floated on and on, a sudden blanching of the blue and violet water-bed had arrested the gaze. Before us uprose a glittering mass of radiant marbles. To know this mass to be Tcheragan made the eyes wide with looking. What would this palace be like — one which had at once delighted the eye of a cultivated, fastidious monarch, and yet had satisfied the untrained taste of his beautiful Circassian — one which, above all else, to entirely content the ambitious, extravagant Mihri must, in point of beauty and elaborate ornamentation, have surpassed both Beylerbey and Dolma Baghcheh?

Tcheragan rose above the purples and violets of the glistening water surface, white, snow-white; its marbles were laced here and there with carvings, yet was there neither gem nor paint, nor hint of colour to mar its fair, clear, and perfect surface. There were traceries, arabesques, curves, rosettes, foliaged cornices, flowery canopies, and lace-worked capitals; but such ornamentation was subordinated to the rich, flowing struc-

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tural lines, as ornament should be. Space, form, and proportion,—these had been the chief essentials held in view, as in the building of Beylerbey. And again we looked forth on a palace that, though neither strictly Saracenic nor Gothic, nor of the Renaissance, nor even flamboyant nor rococo, was yet a pure, lovely, and wondrous work of art. Have these Armenian architects—for most of these later royal palaces have been built by Armenians—have these architects, in their skilful mingling of certain beautiful Saracenic and European building modes, produced the looked-for, the longed-for new architectural masterpiece?

Hundreds of tongues in Constantinople will tell you, that besides being the most original in point of architectural beauty of all the palaces upon the Bosphorus, Tcheragan is in reality Mourad's prison.

When, in his famous European journey, Abdul Aziz went forth to visit foreign courts, two of his young nephews accompanied him. One was Mourad V, and the other the young Abdul Hamid II. Both of these youthful princes were to reign over Turkey. One was to depose his uncle, the other, in his turn, was to take possession of Mourad's throne and of the great Eastern Empire. Mourad V's reign was of short duration. His uncle's tragic end, it is said, produced a nervous shock, the effects of which were to be apparent in a gradual, but sensible unseating of the mental faculties. Once more the Sheikh-ul-Islâm was to prepare the “fetfa” of deposition. In his turn, the doomed young Sultan was to find in the fated palace of Tcheragan his prison-house.

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To look upon as radiant and festal a structure as this glittering marble palace, and to think of it as a prison seemed demanding too much of the imagination.

The green wealth of bloom and verdure that flowered above the gilded garden walls,—these were surely the gardens of beatified beings, not of poor mortals with wandering wits. The guards and the sentry boxes lining the wrought-iron railing below the walls would appear to prove any story, for the Palace of Tcheragan was more rigidly sentinelled than was Beylerbey. Its forests and gardens, however, adjoin those of Yildiz Kiosk. They make, indeed, one vast pleasure park with the royal domains.

Whether any one of the hundred and one stories of Mourad's long captivity of twenty-eight years be true or not; whether he has been ill or well treated; whether innumerable or none have been the Georgian and Circassian virgins sacrificed to lightening the tedium of his so-called "imprisonment;" whether the deposed Sultan has passed these slow years of over a quarter of a century within the sadly festal halls of Tcheragan; or whether, as is more probable, he is carefully looked after, in the acute state of mania those best advised assert to be the true condition of the former Sultan's mental state, in some one of the kiosks within the triple-walled palace-town of Yildiz, neither you nor I can, at the present moment, actually prove. The secrets of Yildiz Palace are well kept. The remarkable monarch who reigns over Turkey and his palace, and whose grasp is outstretched to guide and direct every tiniest thread of his country's

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destiny, is most marvellous, perhaps, in this: he knows all the world says of him, and yet he is strong enough to keep silent.

Meanwhile the life upon the famous stream held the eyes — dazzled, delighted them. Better than the streets of Stamboul, of Pera, or of Galata, was this watery highway, where men of high and low degree filled yachts, yawls, ferry-boats, and hundreds and hundreds of caïques,—these latter darting in and out of the larger craft like flying minnows.

The Bosphorus was at its best, its gayest hour. The work of the short Turkish day was over. The quais of Pera, of Stamboul, and of Scutari were sending forth officials and merchants to their houses along the bright river shores. Ambassadors and palace officials were steaming up to Bebek or to Therapia. Greek and Armenian merchants, their merchandise piled high in the boat's stern, leant back luxuriously against the high cushioned seats. Between the puffs of their scented cigarettes, the bargains of the day's sales in the Stamboul bazaars were obviously being talked over in leisurely fashion. Richer Turks swept past in steam-launches, or in their four-oared caïques. From the boat-houses along the shores brightly painted boats shot forth filled with veiled shapes. There were hundreds of pink, of yellow, of cream and black parasols held tightly over these enveloped heads. So fiercely clutched were the short-handled head coverings, their holders seemed to be, one and all, under some mysterious vow for self-extinguishment.

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This Turkish crowd, afloat, revealed in certain unmistakable ways their sensuous indulgence in the beauty about them. The older Turks were grave, calm, and stately. There was no unbending of the proud, Turkish carriage. Yet as they swept past in their brilliantly painted caïques, in the deep eyes there was a languorous swimming.



*The Bosphorus*

The younger dandies carried their enjoyment with a lighter abandonment. They curved their young backs into the deep cushions with a flaunting air ; they sent their eyes abroad in search of a European face, unveiled, fresh, and fair. Greek, Armenian, European—such women are the legitimate prey for Turkish glances. For their own women they had no eyes, at least from the *Giaour* standpoint. What coquetry goes on between a Turk and a woman or an

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unmarried girl of his own people, is conducted on principles come down to them from mysterious harem methods. These are as old as those, doubtless, in vogue in Solomon's time. For what, indeed, were that accomplished gentleman of letter's three hundred or more concubines but the ladies of his harem? Slaves, now as then, are found to be a safer medium of communication between lovers than the betraying speech, touch, or glance. If slaves fail, there are said to be still the gipsy sorceress or the merchant of the bazaar for hire, who can penetrate into the rooms of haremliks closed to all but one master's eye. The keen, bitter air of the dark night has, in earlier centuries, surprised many a fair form as, muffled and shrouded, it has found the unexpected punishment, for the reading of certain billets-doux, to lie in the watery grave of the Bosphorus.

The Westerner properly shudders over such horrors. I am not over persuaded as to the genuiness of the moral shiver. If we Americans could prove the bed of the Bosphorus to be as empty of dead men, and of murdered women, as is presumably our own unsullied Hudson, since, at least, our period of its ownership, this Turkish stream would, I fear, lose its chief secret of attraction. The barbarian is still alive, and is more or less actively kicking, in the most saintly of us. Only, for decency's sake, we prefer it should be the Turk who commits the worst of the modern crimes; it is so gratifyingly picturesque to shudder over them, and him, at a distance of four thousand miles.

It is neither on crimes of love nor vengeance one dwells

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as one floats and floats. The Bosphorus may be, indeed, paved with dead men ; it is not of its bed, it is of its wondrous, luminous surface one thinks. The colours of the famous stream were at once inexpressibly delicate and yet sparkling with light. Wher-ever you turned the ordinary and the commonplace had been changed into marvels of beauty. The tinted houses along the shore had taken on the tones of faded jewels. Above them the densely leaved trees were soaked in gold. Garden walls flickered upon the water bed long lines of dissolving, glowing tints. Everywhere the cypresses were black ; the hills were greener than sea-tones ; the cities shining far beyond, toward which our bows were now turned, were become unreal ; they were fantastic realms, already part of the sky splendour, dazzling, aerial, phantasmal.

As we floated on and on, between the palace-lined shores, a stealthy, exquisite languor seemed to creep up from the bright water-world. An all-enveloping warmth — at once ardent and sensuous — as pervasive as though physically communicated, enwrapped the body and sense. This rapturous ecstasy was as delicate as it was complete. Sound, colour, vibration, the human life abroad upon the purpling waters — all ministered to the delectable moment. The cadenced plunge of the great oars was one rhythm ; the sibilant swish of the falling drops along the oar-blades was still another. The rush of the waters upon the low shores, their rustle and licking and kissing was a more distant music.

There was nothing to break the bright dream.

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Not a whisper of discord was abroad upon either water or shore. Squalor, filth, contradictions, contrasts grotesque or revolting — these were a part of another dream, one dreamed long since and forgotten. God and Nature had recaptured their world. With the unbroken dome of blue above ; with this vast water-bed below ; with hills rising and falling along the long, unending shore line, earth, sky, and water presented the old, the ever new miracle of the great, the elemental picture. What man had done in the way of adorning or framing the splendid spectacle could not alter the essential features of its beauty. Neither Sultan nor beggars, neither crimes nor the death rattle of dying cities, neither quarrels over one or over many gods, have had power to rob of one acre of its loveliness, or radically to change the divine outlines of this hyacinthine stream the world calls the Bosphorus.

The hills that lipped its shore, on Europe's side, rose to lose their outlines in verdant slopes. The slopes spread out to forest depths, to long mountain swells and to deep gorges.

Asia, on the opposite shore, from this vantage of distance, began its life in verdure, to end it in sterility. The Asian shore was green and thick and dense with foliage, gardens, and tree-peopled terraces that rose tier on tier till palms and cypresses touched the lean breasts of the hills. Then the green line stopped. Its roots, apparently, could suck no more moisture, for the mother of the world is grown weary and worn. But, since the curse of toil is laid upon all,

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the Asian hills grew on and up till their blues met the fleece of the moving cloud flocks. You could see the Bithynian Olympus shepherding his white flocks, as you floated on and on, far, far below, miles below, out upon the cool of the blue water world.



*The Gateway of the Palace of Dolma Bagbebeb*

Suddenly, as in a dream, you heard the cadenced plunge of the great oars come to a stop. You waked to find your steps slipping on water-splashed quais. Then you were quite fully awake, for twenty dark hands were playing the grace of their Eastern salute upon heart, and lip, and forehead; twenty heads bent low, as once more twenty brilliant cotton handkerchiefs covered the purpling, sweating countenances of His Majesty's crew. For this voyage in the royal caïques had come to an end.

We were led onward, past saluting sentries to a side

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path. The path took us to an open square, at the end of which was a splendid stately gateway. On lofty Corinthian columns a richly carved cornice and parapet rose against the intense blue of the skies. There was a cascade of wreaths and garlands about white urns and rosettes. Above, on a green disc, shone in gold the Imperial cypher. Below, on a paler green background, verses of the Koran were traced in the delicate chirographical characters of which Turkish sign-writers appear to have the secret.

The portal of the great palace was exactly what such a portal should be. It was stately, ornate, majestic, with a floridity of decorative features suitable to an Eastern sky and to the Oriental love of the luxurious.

Guards and soldiers were thick about the great gateway. As they presented arms the ear caught the rustle of other muskets handled at more distant sentry boxes. Through the velvet bunches of the ilex trees, in the gardens fronting the palace steps, wherever the eye went, it was to light upon the glint of steel, or upon the gold of a soldier's uniform. Dolma Bagh-cheh is already the beginning of the present Imperial residence. Its gardens join those of the "Star" Kiosk. Its marbles, quais, gardens, and terraces are the true water front to the hill-fortress wherein the Sultan keeps his state and court.

Once within the great palace, was to be lost in a maze of great halls, of long passage-ways, of vast drawing-rooms, and of state apartments. There were several miles, it seemed to my own, in time, lagging feet, of

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more or less grand, bare, gaudy, inexpressive rooms. One looked for the traces of Eastern taste, of Eastern colours, of the riches and depth of Eastern dyes or tiles in vain. The trail of Europe, and of a tasteless, expressionless Europe, was over the entire interior. Here and there a Persian frieze, or a richly decorated ceiling, or a carved mantel, after some Saracenic design, would tease the eye with a promise of a broader, fuller, Oriental splendour. It was beneath one's feet one could find the sole, sure sign of the East. The Turkish carpets—and there must have been miles of them—were magnificent products of the Turkish loom.

Dolma Baghcheh was not one palace, it seemed, rather a dozen. Its creamy surfaces, softer to the eye than the later palace façades, gave to its interminable lengths a unified appearance. Yet the palace has no true unity. Portions of it were built at different periods. Between five or six lower buildings, of a bastard *Neo-Grec* order, there towers a central structure modern enough to fit into any New York or Parisian street. This latter structure was erected by Sultan Mejid. It was the first of the royal palaces built upon the Bosphorus.

The hegira of the Sultans from Seraglio Point to the shores of the Bosphorus was a bold move planned by one of the gentlest of Sultans. Abdul Medjid, father of the present Sultan, abandoned the palace city of the Osmanlis. On that famous point of land, where tiled and gilded kiosks arose like enchanted palaces, set in the midst of gardens of fabulous beauty,

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there were also grim memories, noisome horrors, and a stench even orange blossoms could not deaden—that of the decaying streets of Stamboul. On the bright, clean shores of the Bosphorus there was a chance for the breathing of fresh air, and for the enjoyment of cleanliness—two novelties ushered in by the nineteenth century, as compellingly attractive to Eastern Sultans as they have proved to Western sovereigns.

Abdul Aziz II added building after building to the great palace. In time it became in itself a little city, wherein the sovereign, the court, certain ministers, and the thousands and thousands of human beings necessary to the state of an Oriental monarch, as well as his city of women, could each and all be suitably lodged—where each, also, could find distraction and amusement. The hundreds of the rooms shown us, empty, deserted, yet exquisitely, beautifully clean, proved the number of the multitudes that had formed the court of this luxurious monarch.

A single picture-gallery recalled once again, with startling vividness, the departure in taste and the courageous breaking with Moslem traditions of which Abdul Aziz had proved himself capable. In these vast, tasteless apartments suddenly to be confronted with Fromentin's Arab horsemen, with their chromatic intensities of colour; to look upon Schreyer's magnificent Bedouins, filling the desert with their fluttering motion and matchless draperies; to find witching Parisiennes in scanty clouds of tulle, figuring as Cabanal delighted to pose his Aphrodites,—these pictured types of men, women, and horses were a

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startling change from yards and yards of heavy costly upholstery.

The room of rooms in all this chain of palaces was the throne room of Dolma Baghcheh. There may be halls larger and other state apartments more imposing than this sumptuously decorated interior. If so, I, for one, know them not. Beside the lofty marble pillars and columns supporting the great central dome of this room, one experiences the same sense of shrinking to midget size that half oppresses, half delights, one in measuring one's insignificance against the lofty, soaring spaces of St. Peters.

This throne room recalled, both in its construction and decoration, rather the Byzantine character of the Justinian architectural masterpiece of St. Sophia than the more austere Christian temple. The mosque motive had obviously been the architect's inspiration. Dome, roofs, tribunes, and side aisles had, however, all been ingeniously adapted to the grand gala necessities of a magnificent court setting. The central dome, though lofty, was beautifully set above the variegated marble pillars. The flat surfaces were decorated with a profusion of brilliant Oriental designs. Gold was everywhere lavishly used. As if to mark, with peculiar emphasis, the festal character of the great room, there hung from the richly tinted dome a monster crystal chandelier. Its innumerable green, red and tulip-hued cup-shaped glass globes were splendidly effective. One could fancy the great shower of light rained upon bared shoulders and glittering uniforms by the many thousands of gas jets.

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One of the balls given by Abdul Aziz in honour of the Empress Eugénie had for its festal centre this truly magnificent state room. What a commingling of dainty French grace and Oriental splendour was then set in this semi-Saracenic frame! Jewelled orders flashed their lights to find their radiance reflected back by a thousand prisms. Parisian tulle ball-gowns and sweeping embroidered satins were scarcely less airy or cunningly patterned than were the dantly ornamented walls.

The present Sultan has given to the throne room a more lasting instance of historic interest than the ruinous festivities of his predecessor.

It is the custom of the Sultans to come to the throne room on the morning of the Baïram ceremony. The Baïram is held at the termination of the long fast (the Eastern Lent) of Ramadan. The ceremonial in the palace consists of the Sultan, accompanied by his court, proceeding to the throne room, there to receive the congratulatory visits of his ministers, of other high officials, and of the diplomatic corps.

Last year, in the year 1901, an unwonted, tragic occurrence interrupted the ceremonial visits before the Sultan's throne. The startling tremors of an earthquake were felt. Fright and panic seized upon the multitude of assembled courtiers and guests. In an instant stately dignity and courteous homage were forgotten in the stronger instinct of self-preservation.

The foreign guests and diplomatic bodies hurried to open doors. The court was gradually, insensibly

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melting away. Two Imperial aides-de-camp were sufficiently ill-inspired — by their frantic dash through a near window — to preserve their lives for the later penalty of immediate banishment.

The Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, alone stood firm, as, for the briefest of seconds, he also stood literally alone.

"I also — I was about to fly like the others. One acts by instinct as well as by imitation in such moments. I was in the tribune, among the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps. Suddenly I saw the great chandelier go rocking, as it were. And I felt the solid marble rocking also beneath my feet. Well, when every one cried out, 'It is an earthquake,' I too did as every one did. I turned to fly, anywhere, everywhere, away from the rocking chandelier. Then the earth quaked no more. It stopped. And so did I.

"It occurred to me to step back, and see what the Sultan was doing. Yes, I was curious — as a woman — if you will. I was alone in the tribune then, the only man, with my curious woman's eyes. The Sultan also, as I saw, stood alone. At first, as I had turned to fly, I had seen him start up from his throne. His ministers, they were not slow, I can tell you, in following. But now, when I was back at my old place, the Sultan, he also had returned to his.

"He stood quite still, and suddenly he seemed also quite tall. He was standing alone on the great carpet before his throne. Every one was with his back turned until, like a booming cannon, — the court and his

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ministers — they heard the Sultan's deep, great voice : “Stand back — back, I say !” And like sheep they all came and stood about. But some were very white. The Sultan was not white. He looked better than I ever saw him. He stood like a general facing battle.

“It was all the braver, for the chandelier, it was still rocking. And it was just over the Sultan's head.”

Such was the story Mr. G——, the clever, accomplished dragoman of our Embassy, told us, with the graphic vividness of his Italian grasp of picturesque detail.

## Chapter XVI

### THE DANCING DERVISHES

IT was to no palace, it was to the Hall of the Dancing Dervishes we were driven on the afternoon of the following day.

To gain the monastery of this strange Brotherhood of the Mevlevi, there was a long drive through the Pera streets. As we stepped from the carriages to enter the gateway of the Dervish convent, the contrasts that had lined our way thither seemed to have crossed the conventional threshold. Weedy gardens made the gorgeous blue, green, and gold tablet above the gateway seem the record of some noble ruin. A child in the arms of a fat, elderly Dervish, seated close to a carved circular fountain, and a babe in the arms of its nurse, made a group as far as possible removed from one's ideas of monastic asceticism.

The monastery of the Dancing Dervishes is a series of low, unpretentious buildings. Of these the hall in which the bi-weekly so-called dancing ceremonies are performed, is the chief.

The group crowding about the doorway, within the building, announced the services to have been already begun. Our entrance and progress toward

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the upper gallery, reserved for our party, made a visible stir. Heads were impatiently raised and some hundreds of eyes were uplifted in semi-reproachful, semi-respectful gaze. The appearance of Mustafa Bey's naval uniform was the signal for a more interested curiosity. There was, however, something better worth watching than even His Majesty's aide-de-camp, an unveiled foreign lady, and several Europeans in the dress of their country. For the dancing, or rather the preliminaries of the famous exercises, had already begun.

The scene that was set directly below our eyes was as strange as it was simple. Within an octagon hall, a low balustrade, some ten feet from the outer wall, described a perfect circle. This circle lay almost exactly within the centre of the room. The floor of this enclosed circle was of wood. It had been polished by the feet of generations of dancers to a satiny finish. Within this enclosed space there stood, close to the railing, a living wall of mantle-draped figures. With eyes bent, with hands folded upon their breasts, this human circle seemed turned to stone. For they moved not, nor indeed did they seem to breathe, so motionless upon the lean high shoulders lay the long, blue mantles.

Around the sacred enclosure the audience, gathered to view these strange ceremonies, sat on the seats furnished by Allah to rich and poor alike. Turks in fezes ; some mollahs in their white and green turbans ; a group of marines in their cool blues and whites, topped by the ever-present scarlet fez ; some soldiers

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and clusters of strangers whose white pallor, dark tweeds, and tall hats were notes of discord in groups where Eastern complexions and the innumerable spots of reds and greens made masses of colour wherever the eye fell — these male groups were seen to be packed thick and close.

Here and there the pale oval of a woman's face loomed out of this masculine medley of foreign and Eastern faces and costumes. Directly across the hall the pure outlines of a Greek face were easily recognisable ; the inheritance of the woman's straight brows, and her full-lipped, classic mouth, centuries of Levantine intermixtures of blood and race had not obliterated. An Armenian, of meaner physical equipment but gaudier of yashmak, poured the liquid fire of her great eyes above the whites of her cotton veil. Within a certain latticed box, nearly opposite to our own seats, the vague outlines of other veiled shapes announced the presence of grander ladies. These also had come to look upon the strange sight of men in petticoats whirl and whirl themselves into an ecstatic stupour.

In the very middle of the upper balcony sat, upon deep cushions, cross-legged, a band of four musicians. Two of these were singing in shrieking discord, if the sounds were to be judged by European taste in musical intervals, in sweetest, most enrapturing harmony, to Oriental ears, a monotonous, endless chant. Like a high, fierce, and angry wind scolding at the house corners, in tempest weather, the chant rose to tattered shrieking at certain given measures ; when it sank to quieter tones, the rasp of the harsh nasal twang, in which

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the tones were emitted, made the melody only a milder form of torture to our ears. The flute and tambourine players, who beat and fifed their droning mechanical accompaniment to this unmelodious chant, seemed equally possessed by the very devils of discord.



*A Dancing Dervish and his Son*

This music, hoarse-voiced, unlovely to ears attuned to the heaven-born strains of Mozart, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Wagner, was as prolific of sensation as the music of "The Magic Flute," or as the exquisite orchestral complexities of a Wagnerian *crescendo*, to these Eastern listeners. Its minor, softer notes had already harmonised this strange, ill-assorted crowd of men and women into subdued quiet. Its semi-barbaric

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primitive beat and measure spoke, apparently, to these ears in ways and meanings forever lost to our more complex organisations. As the chant rose and fell, the influence of the weird music upon the auditors became more and more perceptible. Eyes grew fixed and dreamy ; the luxurious surrender of sense and soul to that rapt state of bliss music alone has the power to evoke, were the signs patent to every seeing eye, to be read in these hundreds of voluptuous, dreamy, Oriental orbs. The larger part of the audience indeed, had come, obviously, to pass a delectable hour at an afternoon concert. It was the character and excellence of the music, quite as much as the dancing of the Dervishes, that crowded this monastery hall twice a week.

Meanwhile, as the music had gathered in shrill, harsh volume, the immobile line of the Dervishes had broken. In single file, with slightly bent heads, and hands lost in the long sleeves of their cloaks, the Brotherhood was seen to be slowly, majestically following one the other. With that peculiar distinction and composed dignity the practice in religious ceremonies seems to develop everywhere among celebrants, the monks circled about the inner side of the railing with perfect step and rhythm. Two quite young boys broke the symmetry of a line whose exact proportion as to height proclaimed the choice of these tall, lean young Dervishes to have been one of careful selection. In step and tread the two boys imitated their elders with marvellous ease. Upon their rounded, boyish faces there was an almost comical solemnity. Though neither

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of the lads could count more than ten or eleven years of life or of religious experience, their gravity and self-possession were as complete as though they had been born in long blue mantles and with tall cone-shaped hats.

Slowly, majestically, keeping due distance one from the other, in perfect measure with the tum-tum ! tum tum ! of the beat upon the tambourine, did the seventeen blue, green, and brown-mantled figures continue their processional march, as round and round the inner side of the low balustrade they bent their steps. Had some quaint Assyrian frieze adorning an archaic temple been suddenly endowed with life, thus would the figures have walked, thus would they have trod the floor, with the same vague abstracted air of beings no longer in touch with earth.

A priest was seen to make his way noiselessly, imperceptibly, through the crowd of the squatting Turks. His long brown coat and his tall green turban caught the light, as he moved onwards. The rich colours were presently merged in the mass of brighter hues beneath him, out of which, when the sun rays caught him anew, he emerged as some monster insect moving hither and thither above a dun-coloured parterre.

Directly opposite to the entrance and the space sacred to the musicians, stood the midrab of this Dervish temple. Towards this niche the priest made his quick, stealthy way. Once within its carved concave, the supple figure relaxed into immobility. A graven image he stood, for the long hour or more of the ceremonies, as impassive as a Hindoo Buddha.

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With the priest's advent, the marching Dervishes came each, as he approached before the midrab, to a slow, dignified halt. A single rug lay upon the satiny floor. The rug was parallel with the steps of the midrab. The Dervish heading the procession, as he neared the carpet, was seen to stop before it. He stood for a brief second, entirely motionless. Then he bowed to the waist, with hands folded upon the breast. After the bow, with an amazing grace and agility, the mantle-clad, petticoated figure stepped across the carpet at a single spring. Once upon its opposite end, the Dervish turned to salute, with the same profound salutation, his brother, who now faced him. Once the two bows interchanged, the first Dervish continued to head the line of march. Each monk bowed, and turned to rejoin, after the simple rite, the already onward moving procession.

Suddenly a high, shrill quaver of song, hoarsely sung by the tenor of the choir, produced a magical effect. The Dervishes stopped their walk on the instant. Each stood to face the priest and the midrab, for a single second of time, rigid and still. Then with widely distended arms, each spread forth the great sleeves of his wide mantle. The grace of the gesture, in thus opening to view their inner garments, had in it the same professional, apparent artlessness as that with which a *première danseuse en scène* throws off the dark cloak which covers her gauze draperies. It was a gesture that announced a great perfection of drill.

Once the arms widely distended, and simultaneously, seventeen blue and green mantles lay at the feet of the

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seventeen Dervishes. The trick had been done with the sleight of hand of a *prestidigitateur*. With equal ease and agility, each mantle was seen to disappear. They had been quickly, noiselessly kicked behind the long skirts of the brethren. The motion was as dexterous as the more familiar one of a woman administering the corrective backward thrust to her train.

As the figures of the Dervishes stood thus unmantled, each was seen to be clad in white. Their long skirts, very full at the waist, reached to the floor. The jacket, covering arms and the upper portion of the body, was also white. This garment had long ends. These ends were found to require a certain nicety of adjustment. For several seconds preparatory to the taking of the first steps in the coming dance, each Dervish was seen busily engaged in confining, securely, the two ends of his jacket within the folds of the broad blue belt folded about the lean waist. Throats and breasts were thus left bare. The nudity of this part of the body was doubly wise. The heat generated by the swift dance was thus somewhat diminished. The rapt ecstasy upon the faces of the Dervishes was also more effectively made plain, thus thrown into relief above the bared throat and open, heaving breast.

Like unto strange birds opening wide wings, preparatory to taking an upward flight, the seventeen white-sleeved arms were once more distended. One hand was held downwards,—this was to signify the earthly ties. The other, the right, was opened heavenward, palm uppermost. This gesture was to typify

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the coming union with the celestial spirits. The head was slightly bent over the right shoulder, and all was now in readiness.

Another high shriek of sound from the singers sent a visible thrill through the silent, motionless dancers. The moment of flight heavenward had come. The long lashes closed on the dark, dreamy orbs. With a motion as light as that of a flower petal lifted by a passing zephyr, each Dervish began to turn and turn upon his bared feet. As they whirled and whirled, each preserving his own place, yet one and all waltzing in the prescribed, enclosed circle, each revolving, as it were, on his own axis, yet each circling round and round the sacred enclosure, a visible, wondrous change came over the faces of the dancers. As the wide skirts filled with air, as the rotary motion became faster and faster, as the seventeen whirling figures seemed scarcely to touch the glassy floor, so light was their tread, upon each face there came a strange, mysterious expression. The dark lids were glued to the now paling cheeks. The muscles of the faces had lost all trace of manly energy. The features of these grown men had taken on the formlessness of babes. An inner, growing beatitude gave to the relaxed mouths, the drooping lids, and the etherealised foreheads an extraordinary look of elation. As the dance grew swifter and swifter, and the music more piercingly shrill, this look of elation passed into one of complete abstraction. A supreme expression, one of rapt ecstasy, finally settled upon the faces of men and boys.

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When the white skirts had reached the point of inflation where their edges were parallel with the waists of their wearers, the longed-for state of beatitude, apparently, had been attained. The whirling, rotary figures were lost, apparently, to all consciousness of action. Their souls were in flight. They were in exquisite communion with that paradise of feeling, sensation, and celestial rapture, unattainable save by such mystic, trance-producing motion.

A similar change had swept over the countenances of the men, the women, and upon the faces of the children brought to view this strange union of men with their God; even the little boys who sat close to the balustrade winked and blinked. Their childish lids were tremulous. As if in answer to the beat and rhythm of the barbaric medley of flute, and song, and tambourine, the baby lids rose and fell and rose and fell. The women's veiled heads were moving from side to side, languidly, in sensuous, voluptuous response to the tum-tum! of the twanging tambourine. One negress's eyes, a late comer, looked poppy-drugged. She finally sank to her couch, upon her wide haunches, with a grunt of ecstatic stupour. Even the men's eyes, beneath their fezes, were drowsy, were half closed, as though nearly lulled to slumber.

Presently the music struck a minor note. The dancers stopped. But not on the instant could the wandering spirits be recalled from their paradisaical journey. Lids were only slowly opened. The distended arms came gracefully to their droop upon the now lifeless skirts. The brown, bared breasts heaved,

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but only slightly. The beads of perspiration made the bronze surfaces shine as though freshly polished. And presently once again the faces of the Dervishes had regained their more human look of expressionless calm.

Within the inner circle of this now motionless band a group of older Dervishes had silently taken their places. After the same march in processional line as had opened the ceremonies,—a march obviously designed to furnish a rest and change to the more tiring rotary motion,—after a few turns about the balustrade, once more the dance began.

This time the whirling was fast and furious. The little boys turned like swiftly spun tops. The youthful, ascetic monks abandoned themselves to the voluptuous rhythm of the dance as might a lovesick maiden to the arms of her lover. Louder and louder shrieked the music. Faster and faster whirled the waltzers. Indescribable was the lightness of tread. Amazing their power of endurance! Paler and paler grew the wan cheeks; more and more sunken were the eyes within the deep sockets; yet upon pallid cheeks and brow the light of an exquisite and rapturous ecstasy grew brighter and brighter. Upon the face of one of the younger, more wan-looking brethren, as he whirled past us, swift and ever swifter, with his skirts stiffly distended, his hands lifted as if up-borne by some unseen celestial strength,—upon his face there shone, through the waxen pallor of his relaxed features, the look of those in presence of some celestial vision. Was he already united to the celestial element? Had

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the paradisaic odours and perfumes, imperceptible to our coarser senses,—had these already impregnated his soul, lifting him into regions of beatitude?

Within the inner circle, the little group of older brethren were doing their whirling with slower, more measured pace. Age, and the effects of that over-indulgence of the appetites and passions, said to be the inevitable results of this sensuous cult, held these older monks in the leash of lessened activity. The skirts of these sybaritic brethren were barely distended. Upon their faces one searched in vain for the expected look of ecstatic abstraction. The pleasures of the body had barred the way to trance-like raptures.

One Dervish there was among these elder monks, however, whose dancing and whose apparent power of sense-obliteration were marvellous. His first whirl proclaimed him as the most exquisite of all the dancers. The perfect rhythm of his step communicated an indescribable grace to his somewhat heavily moulded frame. As he swept onward, such was the charm emanating from his perfectly modulated movements, so singular a harmony did he communicate to the sweep of his person, to the billowy undulations of his skirts, and to the poise of his bent head, with its huge cone-shaped cap, that all other dancers within the room seemed, by contrast, machine-impelled. With the very first of his circling motions, his face had changed from the countenance of commonplace to one touched with a heaven-born light.

The whirling groups, the music with its poundings, the pipings and hoarse singing, went on and on.

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The lifted faces were growing ominously pale; the lips were the lips of those about to swoon. But faster and ever faster swirled the great skirts. And louder and ever louder dinned the barbarous music upon the ear. Would it go on and on, without end?

A shout, a cry as of one caught up into some supernatural ecstasy, made the heart jump; one's breath come thick and fast. One of the monks had fallen to the ground. The shout was one of triumph. As he swooned, his union with God had been consummated. When his brethren stooped to bear him away, the face was seen to be that of the wan ascetic. He looked the picture of that beautiful Death the mediæval painters reserved to typify the peace of martyred saints. The soul of the Dervish seemed indeed to have taken its flight upward. The wings of the trance-dance,—had it swept him to an eternity of bliss?

His brethren knew better. He was borne slowly forth, the dancers making way for the group and its burden. How did holy men, in closest union with celestial forces, with their human lids hermetically sealed, how did such know just the exact limit of room to give to let that group of bearers pass safely through their wondrous circle?

The circle reclosed as though there had never been a wan ascetic among them. The dancers presently lifted their voices. They and the priest, as they came to their second rest, all joined in the chant of the choristers. The voices rose and fell, and shrieked and moaned, filling the temple with the cries of men

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calling upon their God to come nearer and ever nearer. The voices of those who had borne away their swooning brother were now joined to the strong, discordant male chorus. And after the singing, the dancing began anew.

It was thus we left them. The vision of the whirling white figures ; the memory of the pale ecstatic faces ; the recurrent sounds of the barbaric songs ; the motionless figure of the priest, grave as a carven statue in his sculptured midrab,—these were the sounds and memories that pursued us into the open streets.

The clamour of the fruit venders seemed less harsh than the music that had held — thrilled, and breathless — that company of silent men and women.

Even as the circle of the dancers closed in, obliterating all trace of their missing brother, thus on and on — and for how many a century, who knows ? — may the white skirts of rapture-faced Dervishes continue to whirl and whirl. Because to us the secret of their musical rhythm is lost ; because the mystery of that most antique and classical of unions — religious ecstasy and the dance — is a cult and a mystery no longer, other ears than ours may yet find in such music the old ecstatic stupour ; and millions of unborn, wan-faced men may continue to turn on their heels till they shout and swoon.

## Chapter XVII

### ALL IN A DAY

#### I

AN October sun as warm as June, with lights and an air to make the illusion complete—this summer in mid-October had borne a message to every open-air idler in Constantinople.

Others besides an American ambassador and his suite had listened to the voices,—to that choir invisible,—raining their song down from the pure sky-spaces. The crowd, in a word, that had gathered about the steamboat landing to buy tickets for Eyoub, we found unpleasantly numerous.

There was that other crowd — that living bridge of human shapes that links together all the live-long day the shores of Pera and Stamboul — this one was massed behind our backs. Its rustle and motion were repeated below our feet, wherever the waters of the Horn rolled, adorably blue and fathomless.

Out of the hundreds of throats shouting upward from the crinkled waters their persuasive appeals, one there was that caught both ear and eye. “I take you in caïque, as quick as light to Scutari, to Seven Towers, to Prince’s Islands.” This particular boatman’s violet shirt went uncommonly well with his

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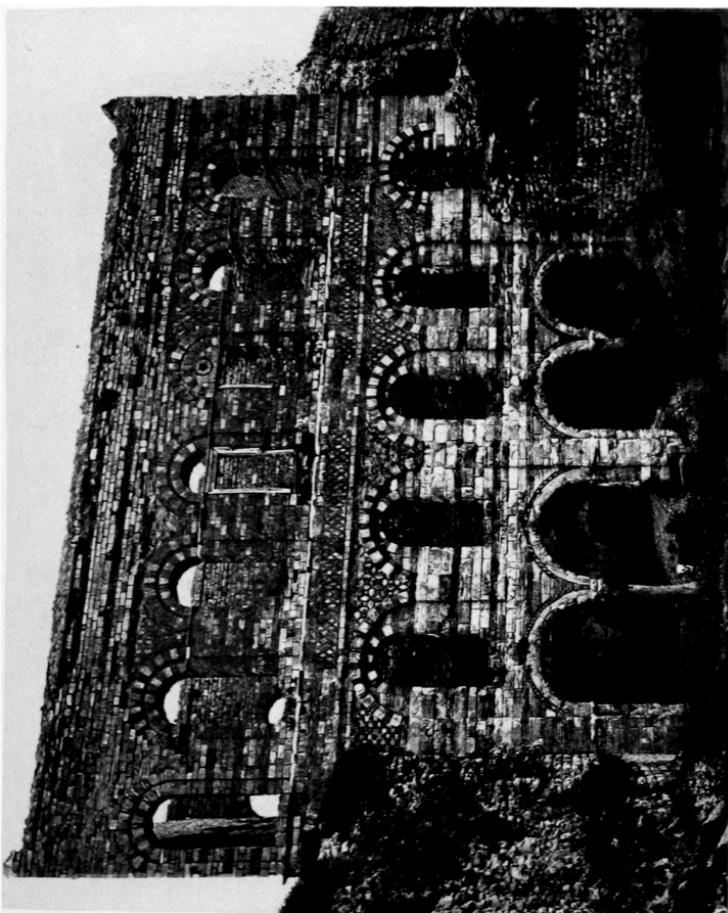
Greek blue eyes and his lacquer-coloured skin. These well-arranged contrasts provoked an instant's conflict. Was this our plan for the day, the best of all plans? If so, why did this brilliant little picture dancing below jostle my serenity? Why did scarlet cushions, set upon shining yellow seats — why did pink and blue and purple traceried ornamentation on a boat's sides — why did a violet, blue-eyed boatman in a well-chosen shirt, — suddenly look supremely attractive? A prophet's mosque and the sacred sword of the Prophet; a Christian college; a breakfast of diplomats set amid the gardens of Therapia; even the promised howl of wild Dervishes as a finish to the day's entertainment — what were these as weighed against the rapture of being afloat in an open boat between the two wondrous blues?

On such a day, the air breathed upon the face of conviction, to mock it with the light scorn of contempt for all fixed conclusions, moral or otherwise. Beneath such a sky, enfolded thus in such exquisite, caressive warmth, there seemed to be one thing of supreme importance. Live! live to the uttermost! open every pore and sense, and fill both body and soul with the wine of life! Earth, air, sky, water shouted these things in your ears.

That which was determining the character of the answer was the crowd about us. The close, dense, packed crowd of Turks in loose, ill-fitting coats and scarlet fezes; of negresses with filthy white veils above whose tattered edges the glowing African eyes roamed wide and far, every turn showing the ivory-whites of



*The Palace of Belisarius*





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their setting ; of groups of showy Albanians in their blues and gold ; of tattered vendors, carrying their wares to inland markets ; and of the group, above all others, that riveted the eye,— the group centring about the correctly attired figure of the American ambassador, whose simple morning coat and black tie, whose collected repose and air of command, were the dress and the bearing of one of the ruling race.

All of this crowd must wait, must stand wedged in, upon rickety stairs and treacherously loose planks. For the Constantinople steamboat companies are not, as yet, consumed with that pride to surpass their competitors, which might be a warrantable virtue, you think, as your feet slip and turn on the worm-eaten landing. You are pushed along, up still another tilting stair, by the rags behind you, wrapping the human shapes ; again you stand and wait, hot now, yet uncomplaining,— hot and uncomplaining as the crowds that have gathered here, and those that will continue to gather until some day, when rags and decorations, fezes and veils, will be precipitated below into the laughing waters. After due time the same loose-jointed stairway and landing will be negligently rebuilt ; for that which has been good enough for travelling Mussulmans, for some fifty years, will surely be found of equal efficiency for a century or more to come ; such will be the *laissez-aller* system of reasoning, born of these delicious Eastern skies and of the lazy Oriental business methods.

Suddenly, out of the crowd aslant upon the steps, a voice caught the ear.

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“Have mercy! Oh, have mercy! A piastre!”

The voice was soft. It was one that had seductive notes in its rich gamut. Its sweetness was the more appealing because of the surprising nearness of the speaker. The owner of the voice, a girl, had known how to crowd her way in toward the foreign group; she stood at our elbows. Her single garment, a ragged calico slip, was gathered about her with an Eastern grace. She fronted our glance with a beggar’s effrontery. The slim, lissome outlines of a perfectly modelled figure, meanwhile, were all but fully revealed. As she slid, worming herself in and out of the crowd, several quite inconvenient disclosures were made. But the proprieties, it appeared, were being most correctly respected. Across her mouth and chin, the beggar maid held the tattered remnant of a smudgy white yaskmak. Her henna-tipped fingers—dyed to the very extreme of fashion, as far as the second finger-joint—further made up for all other deficiencies in costume.

The henna-tipped fingers had at their command a variety of illustrative gestures. With a motion whose deft grace had been caught from thousands of dead-and-gone Eastern ancestors, this spawn of the Galata docks made known to at least one head of a Christian household his duty toward those in all countries whom we have ever with us.

“Ah! You—you have plenty—plenty money, you should give a little, only a little!” Then she waited, for she had caught her audience. Her climax was to complete its capture. “You give something,

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little, and may your princess wife go to Paradise!" The lips that thus framed the chief of all Moslem blessings meted out to women, smiled triumphantly over black teeth. The henna-tipped fingers were then waved caressingly toward the wrong wife. Palm uppermost the hand was outspread for the expected eleemosynary shower. The child's mistake in correct conjugal assortment was the finishing *coup* that made every male hand, amid the laughter, seek his store of pennies.

The laughter was echoed, from the water below, by an old man and a lad. The two had taken in the scene, along with a leisurely eating of a leek and a fig. Lying flat upon their open boat, they were partaking of their classic meal under the conviction it was breakfast. A quick, sudden splashing of the water made the wide boat rock. The two lying on their hands, pillow'd thus, were content to be rocked, along with their craft. The swirl of a falling body whizzing its way downward was watched by both loungers with imperturbable calm. The falling body was that of the beggar-maid who had slipped from the bridge to her mates' sides. Into the hand of the older man all her pennies were poured. The laughter — as these were counted — came silently, the shoulders shook with inward joy. The leek and the fig were abandoned, on the instant. Both the man and the boy were presently at their oars. The girl, meanwhile, re-adjusted her draperies with the air of one who had made a public success. "On that they will live for a week, if the old man does not drink too much *raki*," murmured our guide, with an unmistak-

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able accent of regret in his tone. “Why waste good money on such as these?” was the unuttered ending of his sentence.

No act of life seemed mistaken under a sun that was turning a world into gold. Once we were amid-stream, the glory of the day burst as a fresh wonder upon the eye. The mosques aloft upon the hills were white as snow. Their minarets were crystal spirals, luminous as torches of light. The blues of the Horn goaded the shores to do their utmost, and apt classical quotations came to the lips the easier, since even Baedeker has learned to quote Procopius. “The Horn,” the grave Greek tells you, “is indeed always calm, and never crested into waves, as though a barrier were placed there to the billows, and all storms were shut out from thence, through reverence of the city; and the whole of it is a harbour so that when a ship is moored there the stern rests on the sea, and the bows on the land, as though the two elements contended with one another, to see which of them could be of greater service to the city.”

Of those other human barriers that have been raised again and again, against the Greek, Roman, Italian, Moslem, Russian, and English foes, of those who have coveted or captured this wondrous harbour and its shores,—of the long history of these, the guide-books give you the usual unenlivening record.

As you slip along, across your glorious, watery pathway, over the liquid, turquoise floor, you will do your own thinking out of the scenes set before and above you.

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Gradually, insensibly, the great forces that have been massed on the hilltops will reform before your mental vision. The light puffs of the caressive winds will seem to be full of spirits, of the gallant, adventurous human spirits, incarnate once in bone and muscle. All those millions of dead-and-gone heroes,



*Jewish Houses in Stamboul*

born of Athenian, Roman, Jewish, French, English, and Italian mothers, will gather thick as the motes in the sunbeams, and the shores will be starred with story of gallant strife and of wonder-moving adventure.

The two shores of the Horn, like the strophe and antistrophe of a Greek chorus, voice the long, historic tragedy fought out across the blue inlet. More truthfully than the banks and hillslopes of its more splendid

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rival, the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn has retained its earlier Eastern character. The cities and villages that come to a finish, along its blue rim, have the casual, improvised air of those who live in their wooden houses as they did, centuries ago, in their tents.

The brown and grey masses aslope upon the hill-sides — masses of grey roofs and tinted wall surfaces — have the look of as many encampments. Separate, detached, these suburban dwellings seem rather pitched between the tree-boughs than builded for a long to-morrow.

Yet certain of the loose, rootless-looking buildings have been here, lining the Horn, for long centuries.

Yonder, across the Stamboul shore, to the right of the outer bridge, beyond the dancing boats of the fishermen's quarter, rises the Jewish quarter of Stamboul. This particular quarter has been Jewish since before the time Constantine decided the city should be Christian. Its few stone-built Byzantine houses are still there to tell you, with their strong, incrustable look of tenacity, that when the Crusaders stormed the great tower across the way — the Genoese Tower — they were there, erect on their stone foundations. Jewish eyes looked out upon the Crusaders, when the chain was quickly lowered — the chain that was always dropped across the channel in time of war. When that famous crusading feat was performed, those tooth-worked cornices and round arched windows were filled with trembling house-owners. These Jewish houses have outlived that attack and how many others ! The millions of Jews that have peopled those houses have

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not been idle, even when dead. They have created a city of their own. Yonder, on the heights adjoining Ok-Meidan, there lies a vast and desolate Golgotha,—a cemetery whose glistening marble tombstones spread far and wide. Even in death, the Jew must strive to oust the heathen, be he Turk or Christian.

As on and on the boat glides, the sights upon the two shores will grow and thicken. As you sit at your ease, letting the warm sun rays clothe you, with the light puffs of winds wafting the perfumes of near gardens — and other perfumes not of gardens — across the brightly lit decks ; as you listen to the voice of Greek and Turk, of Christian and Russian, all inextricably mixed in the chorus of tongues going up from the deck of the ship ; as in a semi-dream, you will find yourself listening to those other voices from the shores it has taken the long centuries to deaden, many of which are even now insistently alive.

When, on Phanar Hill, on the heights of Stamboul, the Greek quarter is outlined to your asking eyes, and you look forth on more brown and grey-brown masses, — dwellings that droop from Phanar Hill — these will tell you the Greeks, their owners, were here before the Jews. They were here to watch the great Roman build a city from out of the ruins of that other one, left as a warning to those who had failed to call Severus emperor. The Greeks are here still to smile at the staring into the blue sky spaces of the miles upon miles of the monster yellow walls Constantine, Theodosius, and Justinian built to guard their millions of subjects.

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Alone of all the Greeks their gods have disappeared. And yet not wholly dead are all of these. The paganism of the Greek ritual embalms many of the older Greek myths ; and that lovely divinity who roamed from Egypt to Greece might still recognise some of her mysterious rites in the worship paid to the Holy Mother with the child Jesus in her arms.

Still active, puissant, sinister, is that side of the Greek spirit that lost Greece to the world. Within the grey and brown masses above us — masses the sun is turning into mansions of beauty — this restless Greek spirit still lives, still moves in its dark ways, still goes abroad to spin about its hated ruler, the Turk, its entangling web of intrigue and conspiracy. The indefatigable spinner of all Greek plots, the Greek patriarch, lives securely within his Episcopal palace. Up yonder, upon the hillslope, Russia's busiest agent and closer friend keeps his semi-royal state. Will the Levantine Greek be here to watch other conquerors enter the blue waters ? Or will the Sons of the Faithful have a renascence of their old warlike spirit? Will they learn a lesson from their Russian foe, and mete out to Jew and Greek alike the harsh yet life-saving sentence Russia, with remorseless rigour, but recently read out to every Jew within her empire? Across the wonder of the blue Horn the drama and tragedy of contending political forces are as rife, as when in Justinian's ears there rang the threatening shouts of "The Blues" from the Hippodrome.

Twenty-six years ago when the magnificence of the Ceremony of Investiture swept these waters,



*The Greek Patriarch*



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did the spinner of webs, in his Patriarchate upon the hillslope, already see in his mind's eye the havoc and loss his clever spinning, out among the hills of Bulgaria, the plains of Servia, the fastnesses of Montenegro, and the slopes of Armenia, would bring to the young ruler going up to receive the sword of the Prophet?

In his white and gold boat, with its twenty-eight oarsmen, the young Abdul Hamid II went forth, in 1876, from the green and gold portals of the Palace of Dolma Baghcheh. On a raised dais of cloth-of-gold the new Sultan sat immobile as an Egyptian King engraven on marble. Behind him, his ministers and court, in their flashing uniforms, filled the long flotilla of royal caïques that made a continuous line of gold from palace to bridge. Upon the shores, millions of throats, in nineteen different tongues, acclaimed the seated figure on its throne-like dais: "Vicar of God;" "Successor to the Prophet;" *Âlem Penah*, "Refuge of the World;" *Zil-ullah*, "Shadow of God;" and *Padishah*, "Father of all the Sovereigns of Earth." This thirty-fourth sovereign of the House of Osman — twenty-eighth in direct descent since the Conquest of Constantine's City — went up to the green vale of Eyoub, through the dark cypress-boughs, to the Prophet's mosque, there to be girded with the sword of Osman. The chief of the Mevlevi Dervishes clasped about the slim waist of the youthful ruler the sacred sword-belt, and with that investiture, anointed him *Imâm-ul-Muslemin* — Pontiff of Mussulmans as well as Supreme Ruler.

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None of the great multitude who hoarsened their glad throats with their reiterated acclamations ; none of the ministers who looked to the “King of Kings” for the performance of the usual miracles confidently expected of those mounting new thrones ; and assuredly least of all, did the newly made ruler himself dream that in the stately Greek Patriarch, Turkey was to find her most unrelenting foe.

The Prophet’s mosque, at the far end of the stream, amid its grove of plane trees and cypresses, presently uprose white and silent. A thousand green boughs drank in the soft sunshine ; and a thousand lights played on the mosque’s glittering wall-surfaces. The air was full of dancing midgets, sun-dusted. The song-birds circled about the twin minarets as though wooing their rival, the Muezzin, to a trial of lark music.

As no *Giaour* may enter the sacred enclosure, you must be content to watch the swirling birds, as you will be forced to limit your inspection to the contrasts presented by the pure, snowy wall-surfaces of the mosque and the living green of country trees. This mosque of the Prophet Mahomet elsewhere, in more incongruous surroundings, would please the eye with its noble glittering squares, surmounted by the well-proportioned central domes and the encircling smaller semi-domes. The isolation of the temple, set in the midst of the sombre cypress groves, gives to the building an immense distinction. One is sensibly impressed by the solemnity, by the grave majesty, with which nature and natural surroundings invest God’s temples, when human utilitarian or desecrating contact is withheld.

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To pass beyond the mosque to its cemetery was to enter a *pliant* enclosure.

The cemetery, in dreariest weather, must always, we thought, be gay. These festal tombs, set in their gilded railings, with their gorgeous, gold arabesques



*The Cemetery at Eyoub*

on blue, green, and pink coloured marble backgrounds, were like unto jewels in rich settings. As brilliantly gold-decked a cemetery as this of Eyoub seemed to offer a premium on burial, and to make the fact of existence itself, indeed, appear to be but the necessary detail inevitable to the attainment of carnal extinction as festally commemorated. Each one of the white and gold, and of the blue and gold headstones turned its head with a semi-conscious, reassur-

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ing air, as if to announce to you it was in the losing of life alone one might hope to find an eternal gaiety.

Year after year the grass grows bright and brighter about these brilliant tombs. More and more Pashas, Effendis, and Beys relax their hold on their varied lives lived out in musk-scented haremliks, or in sad, vast provincial wildernesses, or in the crowded, intrigue-webbed corridors of the Court Palace, to come here, within Death's Acre, to lie still for ever more beneath the fez-cut marble slabs. Even in death, the last final sweets of conscious distinction is theirs ; for it is not given to all to mingle bones and dust with those of chief eunuchs, of Grand Viziers, of Sheikhs-ul-Islâms, and with the royal remains of Sultans' wives and their sons.

Beneath their bloom, tombs and mosque wait on. Year after year the spring floods the wide, open country with its riot of bud and blossom. The looming hills yonder grow green only to turn once more to brown. The lark, singing as he soars, shivering for very joy as he mounts zenithwards, presages summer and gladness to all the beauteous outlook as his folded wings will as surely herald the frosty breath of winter. Yet season after season, tombs and mosque wait on. For to these marbles, time brings all things. More white and gold caïques will swim the blue Horn ; other Sultans will walk between the plane trees to go up to the girding of the sword ; and with the dawn of new reigns, the pulsing hopes of more millions of subjects will leap hot and tremulous, even as the bones and dust beneath the gilded tombs hope to leap at the

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sounding blast of resurrection, blown from Israfil's trumpet.

### II

It was at the turning of the boat that the splendour of the vernal state, in which was set this saints' mosque, was completely revealed. The piling up of the green hills had a royal swing, one that carried the eye on and on to the sweep of the paling blues of the Horn.

Could we have followed the curve, rounding beneath the droop of the hills, in time we should have come to the waters of the two famous streams that feed it,—to the Ali Bey Su, and to that yet more delectable river, Kiat Khânêh Su.

These now innocent-featured rivers were the two whelps of the oracle, Cydaris and Barbysus. Classic sites or their associated terrors bring, apparently, no meaning to modern Turkish femininity ; for it is upon the shores of one of these fearsome streams all the lovely woman-world of Stamboul, of Scutari, of Pera, and of all the Bosphorus, gather, Friday after Friday, to woo new experience, to sit apart or in groups, to taste the rapture of fresh blowing airs, the cool of green bloom, and to feel the sweet, fierce heat of love reblown upon the soul through the strains of the love-songs of wandering Persian players. Of these Sweet Waters of Europe, presumably, no one of the thousands of veiled beauties who haunt those famous meadows, or those who gaze at the rival whiteness of the swans' necks,—as the snowy argosies float from shore to shore,—no one of these open-air loungers have ever

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heard, doubtless, that their *al fresco* pleasure-ground was once a symbol of terror; as no one of the rude grape-growers or simple farmers tilling the vineyards and gardens across the hills to the West, on the plains of Troy, not so very far away, where four cities lie buried, are given to thinking over-much of the unsuspected fact that the chief riches of their soil lie in its being mingled with the dust of Achilles.

The white turbans of fishermen, in tossing caïques, brought our eyes back to our own waters. Above the darting boats, what a frieze was that against the sky-line! Justinian's walls carved their yellow stretches across the blue with as endless lines as the hills they girdled. The blue eyes of the sky looked, also, through the arched windows of Belisarius's Palace, as though a Byzantine Palace in ruins were the setting they had waited for, knowing Time and Eternity were their trusty servants. The exceeding quiet about us seemed to woo time to do its worst. And the worst all the havoc of succeeding empires had wrought was to hang aloft sun-dusted bastions; to make brown ruins glorious with blue sky mosaics; to crown the seven hills Constantine had sealed as his with his Christian temples, magnificent anew with the great Mosques of the Prophet; and what neither tottering thrones nor lost empires had power to stop was the puissant, renascent life of nature that quivered in the near tree boughs, that twinkled in the light of a woman's eye, as she swept her babe to shoulder height ere she boarded the boat, and that throbbed and soared in wild barbaric African song from the tuneful throat of

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a negro oarsman, as he bent now forward, now backward, over his long oar.

Both shores and water were aswarm with life. The country quiet about us made the human stir the more poignantly significant. It became a matter of personal gain or loss whether the tall, cone-turbaned, Howling Dervish, seated below the gang-plank, as mute and unexplosive as any well-behaved Christian, was to leave us at the next village, or whether he would push on as far as the Bridge, and further yet, on to Scutari,—whether, in a word, he would be among those who were to howl for us, and to their own complete satisfaction, some four or five hours later, at the end of our long day.

As we swung amid-stream, from the worm-eaten docks of the brown villages, veiled shapes continued their incessant staggering from the curtained recess, sacred to women, to the gang-plank; there to crouch and clutch, to be in readiness a good half-hour before any possible stopping. Other pink, yellow, green and cinnamon draped figures crowded past the male groups on deck ; each in turn lifted, unsteadily, the sail-cloth curtain that separated one and all—women-born—from the defilement of promiscuity. Along with the stumbling women shapes, went the huge bundles grasped by slaves' arms. All things feminine, nannies and veiled ladies, babies and their nurses, shuffled toward the curtain. These seemed indeed no less marketable as bundles, than those enwrapping grapes, apples, pears, the coffee bags, and the market baskets that were passed in and under, and again were

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passed out of the sacred protection yielded by a bit of soiled canvas.

One passenger was making her way toward the curtain with infinite difficulty. To stumble across a crowded deck, when heavily veiled, may not bring a worse disaster than to collide with the inanimate. To pick one's way through the maze of a deck filled with merchants, with officer's swords, and with a party of *Giaours* who, sitting wide, and in much space, are yet protected by a Some One from the Palace in uniform,—to pick one's way, I say, past such a crowd, when one is blind, and one must substitute a stick for eyes, this is indeed not easy.

The woman was very old. She had the skin and wrinkles witches grow. Her rags were shreds and patches only a witch could have forced, magically, to hang together upon such a collection of bones. Such was the filth of the ragged outfit, one needed no optical proof to assure one the withered shape was not the only creature alive within the rags.

Yet the blind old hag might have been beauty in choicest raiment. For there came to her, in her moment of trouble, the timely courtesy old age in filth and vermin-covered rags receives, as a rule, only in fairy-tales. As she passed between the scant passage-way made by our seated figures, her stick played her false. It slipped on a bit of the deck's iron; the old hands trembled as they were locked in a helpless clasp. She need not have troubled, for beneath the shaking elbow there was instantly swept a firm hand. Mustafa Bey happened to be in the midst of some

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talk with His Excellency, but he finished his sentence, he even began another, altogether unconscious, all the while, that elsewhere, even in certain Christian countries, blind old age, when vermin-covered and ragged-clothed, is not always escorted to its appointed place of safety by smart officers in trig uniforms. The curtain was lifted till the hag was safely beyond it. Then her stick was quietly placed in her outstretched hand. And neither beggar nor Imperial aide-de-camp seemed in the least aware of any unusual act of life having transpired. According to Moslem rules of life indeed, the incident was as commonplace as any other act prompted by polite breeding.

It is such traits as these that win you to take fresh views of the Turk as he is at home and among his people, and not as we Westerners accept him—through the snapshot presentments offered us by the hand of ignorance or of prejudice.

### III

An hour later the government launch, we found, was making merry with that part of the Bosphorus that never is still—close to the Top-Khânêh quais. The swift roll of the wheels of the Imperial carriages had told every passer-by, even the slowest of bullocks along the Pera thoroughfares, that they were late for some particular function. Yet the breakfast that was being spread for us at Therapia must continue to wait, and for a good hour or more.

There was the usual crowd of loafing marines

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enrolled in the corps of the professional marine leisure class, to see the launch make her start. The attitudes assumed by this squad of idlers were those common to such the world over. Tattered turbans or fezes, and ragged trousers with baggy seats, fail to impart to a Moslem water-rat an air superior to his brother who lounges away his existence on the quais of Bou-



*Entrance to the Black Sea*

logne or Havre, in a ragged jersey, and in a beret in mourning for its lost colour.

The "launch" slipped out of its moorings with no help from the Moslem on-lookers. As His Excellency took his seat in the wicker chair on the white deck, the manners of these professional idlers were proved, however, to be above reproach. They salaamed to the most distant fez. And that was the beginning of much salaaming.

Amid-stream, the surprises of our noon-day be-

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gan at the very beginning. The rulings of a stringent etiquette confronted us ere we had made good headway.

“There goes the Russian ambassador,” gravely announced the chargé-d’affaires. He as gravely arose, bowed to the empty air and to the spaces of the opposite shore. After his low bow he presently re-seated himself. The Russian launch passed us, a good bit to the westward, on its way to Stamboul.

“Ah—h! It is the Swedish First Secretary.” A swift yawl-rigged yacht swung close to our gunwales. Its colours were dipped. From its deck and its crimson circle of chairs a gentleman arose, faced our ambassador and chargé-d’affaires, bowed with a great emphasis of civility, waiting, hat in hand, until the bows from our own deck had been delivered, and then as quietly reseated himself. To other trig crafts—to launches, yachts, yawls, and also to gunboats innumerable—were our own colours dipped, and were hats raised. Again and again certain other silent figures saluted, from distant decks, with equal grace and courtesy.

This was the beginning of going back to the little “great world” as it is to be seen at Therapia.

These solemn social rites made the trip up the Bosphorus seem no mere pleasure expedition, but rather a ceremony of some sort, one of semi-state importance. One unconsciously took the attitude of the conventional social parade, of its rigidity and correctness, and of its listless indifference to things and objects outside its own particular world. The shores

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were surveyed with a lessened pressure of interest ; for the talk of those seated within the wicker chairs was of one's own nearer world, or of worlds that touched it. From a critical survey of kings and kingdoms, we had returned to the criticism of that with which we felt ourselves to be intimately familiar — to reviewing the successes and the mistakes that crowd the remote and nearer historic shores of our own land and people, and to the more interesting personal interchange of that harmless gossip without which society would die of inanition. For, indeed, how could we endure existence unless we could announce to each other the over-prolonged absence of certain husbands, or the altogether scandalous, but extraordinary attractions of the wives thus deserted ; of those hearts that had been broken last year, to be wondrously healed by the oldest of all cures, that of substitution, only yesterday ; of who had snubbed and been snubbed ; of who was most in social demand and those least desired ; of what women were *de la dernière volée*, and who would never be of any winged flight, morally or socially ; who promised to "go far" in the great worlds of uncrowned queens or of diplomacy, and who had already suffered the fate of surviving themselves, and been "dropped" into the bottomless abyss reserved for lost society souls. Without such a review of our own world, and our own wise arrangement of its irregularities, life would lack its most delectable ingredient.

The deck of a yacht, or of a steam-launch, with a fine air blowing straight from the Black Sea ; with the pleasing but not disturbing accessories of

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curiously old Turkish houses set amid great gardens and trees ; of pomegranates suddenly bursting, red, intense, upon the eye, to colour the deeper one's outraged sense of sin, committed by one's dearest and nearest; with the slow moving trail of pack-mules crossing hillslopes, to make one turn insensibly to pastoral imagery ; and with magnificent marble palaces, set against sky and mountain distances, to lure one to an occasional breadth of sympathetic admiring outlook, of either a Turkish or of a Christian world,—the deck of a boat, steaming past such shores proved as well adapted to such familiar innocuous conversation as have innumerable French salons and American drawing-rooms. The oldest of worlds drops its years when a new world makes it its own.

That is precisely what the diplomatic corps have done with Therapia. Here the Turkish frontier is passed ; one enters a new old-world,—the world as it has been made by diplomats.

Therapia, we found as we neared its shores, was a bit of Europe set in a Turkish frame. The water-life announced this change of social conditions before our landing. Smart gigs, brilliantly upholstered caïques and modern row-boats, as they darted in among tidy yachts and speckless government launches, were seen to be graced with shapes more familiar at Henley, and “on the river” at Cookham, than in a Turkish classic strait. The fair, fresh skin, and an aureole of blond tresses beneath a picture-hat with many feathers, was the first embodiment presented to our eyes of this far-away world. The lady had brought her English

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art of reclining, with finished, provocative grace amid carefully selected pillows, along with her Gainsborough hat and her polished speech. "Shall you be at the Tomb this evening?" was called across our bows, from the boat scudding away to the left. "Yes, I'll call at four," was the answer from a caïque rower in tennis flannels, with a stroke that sent his boat flying, as the muscular English oarsman rose to give us a fuller view of his limpid blue eyes, of his clipped curls, of his shapely head, and of his nobly modelled shoulders.

"It's a picnic that's on for to-night, at Joshua's Tomb, by moonlight. It's great up there—when the moon is out—quite the best spot anywhere about," was the information contributed by our chargé-d'affaires, as his own blue eyes went wandering backward, not to rounded mountain slope, but to the blond head beneath the great hat rising above purple cushions.

Joshua's entrance upon the scene had been, to phrase our surprise politely, altogether unexpected. To learn that the tomb of as venerable a prophet should be the chosen site by the *beau monde* for its nocturnal gatherings seemed to mock the exquisite gallantry of a certain grand Seigneur of the eighteenth century. "*Ne la regardez pas tant, ma chère, je ne puis vous la donner,*" was that most touching of lover's speeches made by Lord Albemarle when he caught his Lolotte looking fixedly at a star. The world of Therapia, however, denies itself nothing.

As one heard the recital of the water fêtes, the

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picnics, the garden-parties, cotillions, flower-parades, tennis and polo matches, one learned the interesting fact that all Constantinople, all the hills and slopes of the Bosphorus, as well as the bright beaches and deep forest glades of Prince's Islands, all these, it was made quite clear, were the peculiar and entirely private possessions of this Theropian world. As we listened to the passing in review of the various picnics, and to the cotillions given by every sort of light—by candle, electric, lantern, and moonlight or dawn light; to the excursions, to the innumerable garden-parties and the dinners whose *mets* put the climates of the whole world to outrage the seasons—parties and dinners given and eaten in every picturesque setting from the shores of the Black Sea to the Dardanelles—the true import and meaning of time's preservation of the beauty and antiquity decking these classic shores was made entirely obvious. This world that felt itself to be in exile must have its games, both of diplomacy as well as of the heart and muscles, at least perfectly set. Infinite variety of background must be a substitute for the wonted changeful excitements of a circle that, in Hobart Pasha's classic phrase knows itself to be "Sacred," and yet dreads the full knowledge of its elect exclusiveness and isolation.

Ashore, the villas and "Embassy palaces" were found to be the dwellings of cosmopolitans. The roofs and walls that sheltered these kings of diplomacy in the faraway exile of Therapia, were roofs and wall surfaces one may see on the banks of the Thames, the Rhine, the Danube, or the Hudson.

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Across the tiny bay the white marbles of the Russian Embassy made the rococo villas nesting in the nearer gardens seem the more flauntingly tasteless. Wicker chairs and English tea-tables were exotics amid Eastern veranda draperies, and the dulled gorgeousness of immense Turkish carpets. The gardens surrounding the Embassy and ministerial dwellings told you, in their flower language of Dutch tulips, of homely flock and marigold patches, the taste of those who either now, or formerly, had thus set before them reminders of their Dutch or English homes.

Paradise though Therapia seems to eyes unsated with its beauty, it is a paradise from which, apparently, its world willingly enough flees. At breakfast, to mention a well-known ambassador or minister was only to learn of his absence. All the diplomatic world it appeared, or a large part of it, was "on leave." Aix-les-Bains, Vichy, Ostend, Wiesbaden—the favourite European watering-places—were performing the miracle of their cures, medicinal as well as social, to worn or wearied diplomats. The fate of nations was in abeyance; the rulers of their destinies were taking the waters.

Diminished in point of numbers, as is this "Sacred circle" at Therapia, in the summer and early autumnal season, other intensities than those of diplomacy were kept alive among certain of those who remained at their posts.

"*Vous y êtes?*" were the words that announced, after the long breakfast, the opening of a more or less familiar scene. The lady's voice was as cosmopolitan

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in tone as the character of her beauty was betraying. There was no mistaking the nationality of one whose complexion was as exquisite as her hands and feet were models of delicate perfection. The lady was standing close to a strange-featured vine. The vines were clinging to the great columns of a veranda. The arms of the human flower, in virginal muslins, were clasped about both vines and columns. The sparkling blue orbs were bent to a man's shape, standing immediately below, on the greensward. And the man was looking at the eyes above him as he might at an image of fate. "You're not in it? You're not going? Then the thing will be a failure. *Je n' irais pas, non plus!*" And neither of the figures stirred. They were saying all the rest, all that neither needed to say, through their eyes. That particular flirtation, I concluded, as we passed rapidly onward, needed no help whatever from either the picturesque setting of a Prophet's Tomb, or the tender light of an October moon; it had reached the stage of drama.

## IV

A cool, high sitting-room, set above an immense outlook; the ruins of Mahomet the Conqueror's great towers of Rumili-Hissar as the setting to one prospect, above which, to the left, towered the walls of the American College; the walls of the latter, as intact as the stones of the Moslem Fortress, were seen to be picturesquely ragged and torn; and, within this high-hung drawing-room the low bookcases, the prints,

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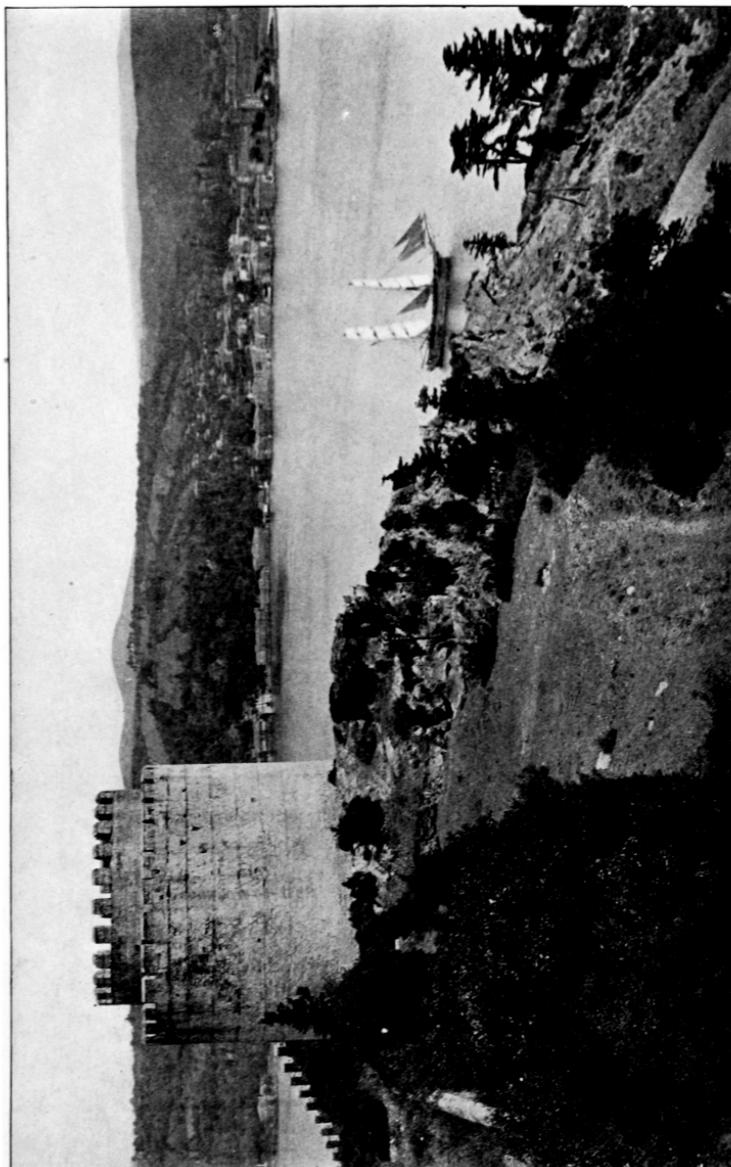
and tender-toned engravings, the flower-vases set against snowy window-curtains,—these were here to tell you that in the home of the President of Robert College you would be in a world as far removed from the world of Therapia as was this room itself; for the room was a bit of American home-life, set within the immensity of its Turkish outlook.

From out the green cool of the cosey interior, we picked our way across shiney gravel paths, between brilliant, symmetrically laid flower beds, to mount the College steps.

His Excellency had his duty before him, as he gravely went onward. All those hurrying shapes and eager faces, pressing through hall-ways and lecture-rooms,—faces whose young, curious eyes shot swift side glances at the tall central figure, moving compositely upward, docilely following their President,—each and every one of these Montenegrins, Servians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Syrians, Jews, and Greeks, whose diverse nationalities make Robert College a veritable Babel of tongues,—these hurrying students were in haste to get to their places, in the great Hall.

The audience that faced our Ambassador, when his time came to speak, was such a gathering as other generals have had before them, from Darius and Alexander to Napoleon, when, to win great battles among mixed Eastern peoples, they were forced to recruit their armies with the material the East offered.

The bright, the piercing Jewish and Armenian eyes were fixed with a great intensity of interest upon the



*The Fortress Rumili-Hissar*



## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

standing figure of His Excellency ; the passionate gaze of the Bulgarian was rained upon this figure ; the Montenegrin fixed it with his glowing depth of glance, as the sadder-eyed Syrian seemed to ask of it to yield up its secret of power and success. Each and all of these ardent-browed students had the question that filled their young souls written upon the full crimson of their half-open lips. Was it indeed in colleges such as this, in such courses of study, through the speaking of the English tongue, that one alone may grow to be the general of an army, a true captain of industry, a distinguished ambassador, and an orator whose words came as easily as though they were read from a book ? Was the incomparable ease and the finish of the polished sentences, — were these arts that could be learned when one became truly skilled in the use of English, and learned through foreign tongues ? Eager-eyed, intent, with bent bodies and devouring gaze, these hundreds of students hung upon the words of His Excellency as though these were to furnish the clue to the great problems of their lives. Their quick humour was ripe, also, for the point of the apt story, with its American appositeness ; their knowledge of the English classics was triumphantly tested by their round of applause at the completion of a Shakesperian quotation ; and the demonstration of their rapture was unmistakable as, the climax reached, the part America and American philanthropy had played in the greatest of all problems, that of education, was ringingly voiced.

The little speech had been short. It was a model for such speeches to those of us who have suffered

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from others that were not short. The American brevity of wit, the aptness of quotation, and the forceful, practical common-sense,—the speech of the day had had all of these qualities. The students had answered it as students do when their hot young souls have been reached and thrilled. Their cheers shook the polished rafters, and they rang on and on, as down between their lines, between shouting throats and flashing eyes, the now entirely composed figure of His Excellency moved toward the open door. The fire of the orator was gone out of him; he had returned to the calm manner of the rulers across the seas.

“And the Turks? are there as many Turks as there are Armenians and Greeks?” I had ventured the question, almost at the last. We had swept downwards to the narrow spaces of the garden beds. The talk had been of the sixteen nationalities of the students assembled, of all save one.

“We have a few, a very few Turks,” the President slowly replied. “But they rarely or ever graduate,” was the answer of this man of truth.

Of the true causes of this absence not one of the Turks in all Constantinople will tell you, any more than, a half-hour later, the bronze depths of the fathomless Turkish eyes, lifted from row-boats—as these latter parted to let us slip onward—revealed the least interest or curiosity in the solemn social rites once again interchanged between the foreign yachts. The Turks, Persians, Greeks, and Armenians, seated in their swift caïques, looked upon the strange salutations as they might upon the antics of an inferior race.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Their dark eyes expressed nothing, not even the desire to understand. The Bosphorus is full of strange sights, as it is of strange people and strange temples. Why trouble to ask one's mind questions about things that make no manner of difference? To-day it is the foreign ways of Franks, Americans, English, Swedes, or Germans. To-morrow it may be the less strange ways of the Russian—and at closer quarters. Let us sleep and forget. Only Allah is great!

The great brown eyes reflect nothing of all this; only the purple waters reflect their colours and the bright hues of the painted caiques. Upon the faces of the unveiled not a sign of what the lips were saying, or what the calm, thinking mind was meditating, was written. The face of a Turk is no mirror. It will tell you nothing—least of all what it thinks of your *Giaour* way of bowing and salaaming, or of your colleges or churches or schools called “The Missions.”

Another mysterious Eastern secret was to be withheld from us. We were late. The gorgeous purple and orange sunset that was playing its chromatic intensities of colour upon Stamboul told how much too late we were for the promised howling of the Dervishes at Scutari. The Dervishes were, indeed, long since done with their shouting. They were dining. Another week must roll by ere we might hope to look upon the ecstasies of their more spiritual transports.

## Chapter XVIII

### THE CITIES OF SEVERUS, CONSTANTINE, AND JUSTINIAN

#### I

THE day will come when you will go forth to peer eagerly into the squalid, ill-smelling streets of the city, that again and again, across the Golden Horn, will rise resplendent as a torch of flame in the sunset hues.

You will cross the great Bridge to Stamboul. You will push through thronged streets ; past strange sights already grown half familiar ; you will be oblivious to the dirt you know now to be inseparable from this Eastern beauty ; and you will be equally indifferent to the allurements of open mosque doors or bazaar-crowded shops. That which you have come to see is none of these. Your search is for the cities that are dead, for sites and stones once bristling with the life of millions, where now the living can muster but some thousands.

Presently, after leaving the great mosque that stands at the head of the Bridge — the Valideh-Sultan Mosque — you will be driven through the packed streets to a high, open, dusty space. The open space,

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

— wide as it is — you perceive, has but three objects standing within its long ellipse. Slowly you will be driven round and round each of these ; and it will be only after a certain time — only after a more or less assiduous study of the obelisk and the two columns,



*Bazaar, Washing Fountain, and Mosque*

and after measuring the shape and length of the space within which these three stand — that the true, the stupendous meaning of this site and of its upright, though defaced, obelisk and the rusty columns will be apprehended.

Phantom-like, a great city will grow out of the dust in which you stand inch-thick. Although its outlines will melt more or less into pure conjecture, yet will its face take on at least something of its old beauty and

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

colouring ; and more and more clearly will the enchantment of its gold-wrought draperies begin to float before the mental vision.

For such a reincarnation one must breathe upon the dust of ruins ; one must work the miracle of resurrection upon crumbling stones and the worn face of weather-stained sculptures. In this more or less shapeless, torn, and mangled city, a single column must reconstruct an epoch ; out of the dusty spaces of an open oblong one must recreate breathless millions ; through ruined arches one must imagine the watchful glitter in the eyes of dead Roman sentries, and in the sad forlornness of roofless palaces place the magnificence of Justinian and the dauntless, god-like heroism of Belisarius.

The Byzantium Constantine and Justinian built, and that Procopius paints with such marvellous realism,—any one of us may relive the life of that Byzantine world and feel it, know it, indeed, as we read those illumined pages, to be no phantom world, but a world as near, as intimately familiar as the one in which we live out our own brief lives,—this city lies scattered far beyond the seven hills of Stamboul. To measure its vast limits you will wander far afield into country lanes, through grassy meadows, along deserted sea-beaches ; you must face miles and miles of cypress forests ; and must pass from the shining Marmora shores to the liquid sapphires of the Golden Horn.

When Constantine looked forth, in his turn, upon the beauty of this Thracian promontory, his clear mind saw that if Roman Eagles were to rule an Asian

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world, it was here the conquering standards must be planted.

Yet this city of Constantine and of Justinian—one of whose chief centres lay here where your feet are standing—this city, old as it now seems to our eyes and sense, was modern to the Græco-Roman world of Procopius. For beneath and within the roar and tumult of that excitable, busy, thronged Byzantium, there lay hidden, ruined, the traces of yet another city, one that also had throbbed with feverish life, had pulsed with adventure, and had tasted the bitter waters of adversity.

Of the Acropolis, walls, town limits, of even the principal gates of this older Greek city Severus destroyed in a fit of temper,—only to rebuild it when in cooler, saner mood—of this most ancient of all the cities of Byzantium, archæologists talk with as serene and assured a tone as they will be quite certain to disagree concerning all of the more important details.

Out and beyond the walls of this Greek Byzantium there still lives, however, peopling the airy sky-spaces, a host of beautiful, of god-like shapes. The deeds and adventures of these unreal, yet very living shapes, have passed into your blood and into mine. We of this twentieth century are different from the people we should have been had none of those wondrous, half-real, half-mythical Greek heroes and heroines lived, loved, or wandered forth to these distant, semi-mythic seas and lands they had made classic before they became historic.

Better than following sunken wall-surfaces is it to

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

trace the fierce and flashing splendour of the Fleet of the Argonauts as they swept the seas below us ; as they sped their boats, through brightening weather, to the straits yonder that rolled before them like a meadow. On and on, far up beyond the stream we call the Bosphorus, the victorious Jason led his hero-laden vessels, past the rocking Symplegades, those treacherous, bluish rocks that smite and clash when the sea is all high in the wind.

Closer to Grecian shores, those other Greeks are as immemorially alive, who, suitors of golden-haired Helen, wooed immortal fame and death also as the penalty of their lover's vow. Patroclus and Hector, as did Priam — as did Achilles — looked forth from the now marshy plains of Troy to the bleak Thracian coast ; above them towered, as it still soars aloft, the snowy-crested summit of Mont Ida.

Love, like a “dancing psaltress,” passes from the tent of Achilles, and his passion for the captive maiden Briseïs, to the mad waters of the Hellespont yonder. Those waiting lips of Hero, that passion-pulsing frame of Leander,— how many millions of dead and gone women have likened their luckless fate to that immortal shape, to that embodiment of waiting, widowed maidenhood ?

With such shapes and phantoms—with these the better-tempered, more realisable spirits of great poets' fancies,— with such are the shores and seas of that lost Trojan world peopled. The spirits—as spirits will—have loosened their hold in this the land of their imaginary exploits. They have flown abroad to

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

work mysterious change in millions of dead and in yet unborn millions of men. The dim, mysterious truths, lisped as poems by the singing voice of genius,



*The Obelisk of Theodosius*

— these truths sing on. Homer, Hesiod, those immortal bards have peopled our sky and filled our lives with god-like divinities. This distant glory, in our

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

day, is in nearer view. The achievements of gods are become the deeds of men. But it was those flashing figures in the sky that made men long to do their best, to climb to them, to bring the distant glory nearer.

This mighty host it is, I for one must ever choose, when, in attempting to rebuild for you the phantom city, I strive to people it with those still living heroes, and all that host of lovely women on whose glorious breasts the world has “based its head,” and gone forth comforted and stirred anew to fresh endeavour.

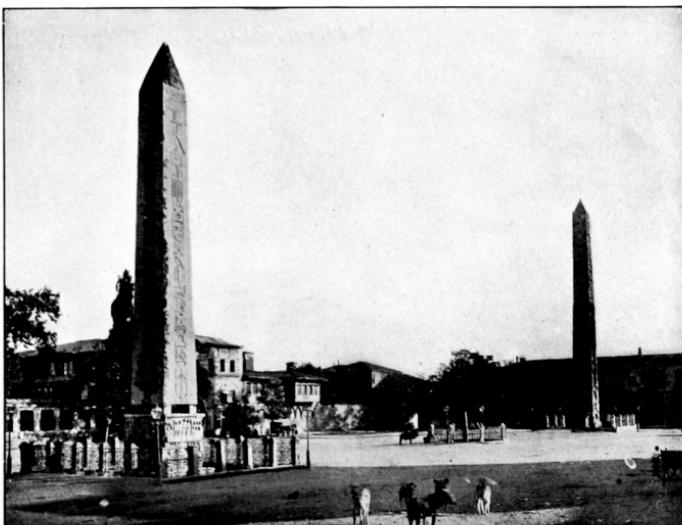
## II

“In Constantinople, God had Santa Sophia, the Emperor the Sacred Palace, and the people had the Hippodrome.”

From the time of the rebuilding of the Greek city by Severus, to the epoch when the Greek gods were banished from their temples to be replaced by the worship of Jesus, there had swept the tidal changes of two centuries. Constantine touched his new capital with the magic-working hand of a great builder who was also a great emperor. His prophetic genius saw clearly that if his Byzantium — his own city of Constantinople — was to be truly a great capital, one to strike with awe as well as to awaken the admiration of an Asiatic world, the new city must be as well equipped with impressive cast distinctions as with the classic masterpieces of art with which he filled his palaces, churches, hippodromes, baths and streets. Even a royal capital may be plebeian, if it be too new.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

To give to the New Rome the last finishing touch of completeness, Constantine imported enough Roman aristocrats, and the aristocrats, in their turn, brought enough of their vices and tastes to take the new look from off the splendid, freshly glittering city.



*Obelisk in Hippodrome*

A forty days' continuous festivity was the baptism of the Eastern Rome. Of this city Constantine and his immediate successors built, there are still left fragments of his great walls and their monster bastions; there is the open ellipse of his Hippodrome, there are the great obelisk and the two columns to mark still the spina of its vast arena; and there are also the Chifte-Hamman, the baths more recently discovered by Monsieur Texier.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

You will pass a certain time in deciphering the marvellously preserved features of the hundreds of faces looking out at you from the base of the obelisk. With this obelisk Thothmes III had seen fit to embellish his own capital of Heliopolis. The Emperor Theodosius, in an African campaign, brought the trophy back with him, to see carved upon its base his own Imperial features, together with rows upon rows of dancers, courtiers, and guards.

The dusty, greenish column beyond the obelisk, is begrimed with the dirt and dust of five-and-twenty centuries. As you begin to examine this column, you perceive its spirals take on the serpentine twists peculiar to ophidians. Then, presently, your pulse is stirred ; for you wonder if these three serpents' bodies can be indeed that famous serpent column whose lost bronzed heads formed the base for the golden tripod on which sat the priestesses of Apollo at the Delphic Oracle, when the sacred fumes mounted ! Then, though the heads are gone, and you see only a dull greenish column, your breath comes very quick indeed. You learn your conjecture was truth ; and you know and realise, as your pulse bounds, you stand before one of the most extraordinarily interesting of all human monuments. Just how the Delphic Column happened to stand on this the open At Meidan—"the horse market" of Stamboul — this mystery will be solved later by the greatest of all novels of adventure, by the plain facts of history.

It is enough for you now, in search of the stir communicated by that delicate sensation coarsened by the

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

name of sight-seeing — it is enough to stand thus, face-to-face, with as wondrous a monument. For antique Greece and its history are suddenly, miraculously rescued, as from the land of myths; Delphic priestesses in their white robes and golden fillets, swooning in prophetic trance, seem real as the woman shapes flitting noiselessly about in the bright sunlight, in the wide and dusty space.

The other column, standing below, more to the southwestern end, marks still another epoch in this magic-working ellipse. This now disjointed, semi-crumbling column, was once the wonder that rivalled Rhodes. It marked, together with the other two marvels, the axle of that gigantic Hippodrome where the throng of 30,000 living spectators was scarcely more numerous than was the population in stone, of the thousands and thousands of statues adorning this colossal circus. Now you know indeed the truth concerning this dusty oblong space; it was the vast arena whereon were played those scenes and dramas that have changed the face of the world's history.

### III

In the Constantinople of our own day, you will find God still owns Santa Sophia; the great Emperor, dust though he be, still holds a shadowy rule over the Sacred Palace that is only a magnificent memory; and the people still own the Hippodrome; for the Hippodrome is as bare as your hand, save for its three wonder-moving monuments.

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Through the pages of Procopius these, the three chief centres of the Eastern Rome—of Justinian's Byzantium—become intensely real. One may look with the eyes of the author of his "Secret History," into the most hidden places of this antique world. Its acts, motives, ambitions, habits, dress, and its most secret thoughts—you may know the very heart and soul of that Byzantine society, from the ruling master-minds of its two immortal parvenus, of Justinian and his Theodora, and also that of the great general, Belisarius, down to the quarrelsome dregs of the *plebs*—all these minds and souls will be as open a page as is the history of the later Bourbon Louis.

To know this vanished world the better—even though the present recital must be of the briefest outline—let me sketch for you the career of three of its greatest, most influential rulers. The re-casting of that older mould of society becomes possible only as one learns something of its shaping forces. You realise its amazing nearness to your own life and period as you come the closer to its curious form of freedom, to its untamable spirit of adventure, and to the immense chances offered the individual whose courage and genius were equal to his opportunities.

In the last years of the fifth century, three young Macedonian peasants left their home-mountains to seek their fortune. Their kit consisted of the classical sack of the wanderer, with its meagre store of provisions. Thus equipped they set forth for Constantinople. The three lads were fine fellows—vigorous and robust. Once within the capital they found no

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

difficulty in the world in enrolling themselves in the Imperial guard. In the Byzantine world of that day, there was prevalent a democratic spirit which we in our day would fain believe has been of our own ingenious elaboration. The army in the Roman world — whether that world held its capital on the seven hills of Rome or on the seven hills of Constantinople — for the man who enrolled himself in this army there was as great a chance for ruling that army, and through the army the great world of his time, as in our day a common workman may hope to rise to princely fortune. It is not the nature of men who change, nor is it opportunity, in the world's so-called progress. New names are given to new conditions — these but repeat the old experiments under more modern forms.

One of the three lads was to test to the utmost the democratic spirit of his great Byzantine day. Justin's military courage and talent rushed him from officer to general, from general to senator. Commander-in-chief of the Imperial guard, when the Emperor Anastasius died in 518 — it needed only the accidental precipitation of a feeble intrigue to put Justin on the throne of the Cæsars. The lad from the mountains of Macedonia had indeed done well.

Justin did well, in his turn, for his family. Emperor though he was, he was still a big enough human being to be true to his earlier plebeian instincts. He was an aristocrat of feeling; he was as loyal and kind to his own people as he was to his new subjects.

There was a son of one of his sisters, living in an obscure Macedonian village, by name Flavius Petrus

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Sabbatius Justinianus, he whom the world has continued to call familiarly Justinian for some fourteen centuries. This youth was summoned by the uncle, then a general, to Constantinople. In that most magnificent city of that luxury-loving era of human development, Justinian found every door open to him. The peasant uncle had the adoration for learning common to intelligence and talent that has won a great place, and yet must blush before his inferiors, for want of an early training in the merest rudiment of knowledge. Justinian, the nephew, was to be educated on lines that should make others blush.

Constantinople in the fifth century was what Rome had been in the second, what she was still, in all save her one lost glory of being the capital of the Roman Empire.

The Constantinople of the youthful days of Justinian, as Charles Diehl so brilliantly depicts, was already an immense, a stupendously beautiful city. A million men and women filled its gay and gracious streets. Palaces, monasteries, gorgeous Pagan temples changed into Christian churches, new chapels and churches springing up in every street, colonnades crowded with statues almost as numerous as that of the living tide that ebbed and flowed about their base, houses blazing with mosaics, streets crowded with chariots, lictors, slaves, and visitors,—such was the city where the luxurious tastes of two luxury loving worlds, the East and the West, had met to be fused into such a spectacle of splendour as has since remained the synonym of all magnificence.



*Justinian*



## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

The two focal centres of this great world were the Hippodrome and the Sacred Palace.

The Romans and the Byzantines had several passions in common. Their love of games drew them, perhaps, in as close touch as did their delight in magnificence. The *plebs'* ideal of life in Byzantium was reduced to a simple formula. All they asked of their rulers were bread and games. For the former, indeed, if need were, they might obligingly arrange matters with the economies of their dietetics, to delay the insistence of such demands. If the corn-fields of Egypt yielded a poor harvest, if the supply-fleet were unduly delayed,—a delay that made even Justinian tremble when he had succeeded to the throne,—the Byzantine crowds could manage to smile gaily, to laugh, and to shout, though stomachs were starving, provided, always, the great games went on.

Justinian, in any age or country, would have played a great rôle. He possessed that rarest of human qualities in a ruler,—he thoroughly understood the character of his era. When, as the nephew of his peasant uncle, he ascended the throne, from whose steps his treacherous intrigues had removed all other rivals, he displayed, at the very beginning of his reign, those extraordinary qualities that permitted him at once to placate the aristocracy by his imperialism, the church by his zeal as devotee and his love of ecclesiastic grandeur, the army by his limitless desire of empire, and the populace by his knowledge of their longings and tastes. “There must be shows for the amusement of the people,” was almost the very first

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

of his Imperial dicta. His psychology went deeper. "That which is rarely seen, excites the greater delight and admiration." Shows, games, even the triumphal processions, whose most imposing effects were reserved for the criticism and admiration of the thirty thousand spectators massed in the Hippodrome, all of the more savage and brutal sports as well as the more regal magnificence of Imperial displays,—each and all of these were as carefully, as painstakingly arranged and considered, as though this mighty ruler of two worlds were a master stage-manager rather than the reformer and innovator, whose grasp of administration, civic, financial, ecclesiastic and military detail has made his reign as memorable as it was disastrous to Roman supremacy in its final influences.

The centre of all the fierce life of that era was the open dusty space you now traverse, called, in the vernacular of the present day, the At Meidan, "the horse show or horse-market" of Stamboul. The vast arena was overlooked by thousands upon thousands of breathless Byzantines, massed upon the converging stone seats of the immense amphitheatre. Gilded chariots have swept the *spina* of that open wind-blown site; African lions, panthers, bears, and clowns, pantomimes, acrobats, and dancing women have made breathing spaces between the fiercer excitements of mimic battles and naval combats that ended only with the close-drawn curtain of night. Seven days in succession would Byzantium fill the great amphitheatre, to sate a lust for sport so universal that even Procopius himself, no lover of frivolities, confessed that

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

“life without the theatre and the Hippodrome was distinctly devoid of enjoyment.”

This rapture in shows on as vast a scale as that enjoyed by the older worlds, is one we can scarcely hope rightly to estimate. So many of the beauteous accessories have been lost to us! The open-air splendour of sky draperies; the marvellous promenade afforded by the upper stories of a great circus, and the outlook therefrom, such as one may still overlook, indeed, from the grass-grown Græco-Roman theatre of Taormina, where the mountains and gorges of the Sicilian coast droop to give place to the lemon forests that gild the marine blues of the Ægean; where the eye sweeps from low-lying, antique Greek towns to follow the grand outlines of Mount Ætna rising from deep sea purples to be lost in its soaring silver crown;—it is only when one has trod so glorious a temple of the winds, that one can relive the sensations experienced by Procopius, by Justinian, by Theodora or Belisarius, as these, in common with the lowest *plebs* of the city, thrilled to the glory of the great prospect that lay before them.

Through colonnades wherein stood statues,—statues and masterpieces to collect which a whole world had been laid under contribution,—past the divine contours of that statue of Helen, “whose half open mouth was like unto the calyx of a flower;” she, “whose smile enraptured, whose deep eyes and whose enchanting body” made the senses swim,—it was through such a collection of gods and goddesses the men of that day took in the vast Thracian outlook, the amphitheatre

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

of its hills and Asian coasts, its faery isles, its turquoise seas and straits, and the glittering Byzantium below clothed, as was its Empress, in shining jewelled robes.

All this was but a simple accessory to the pulse-stirring emotions evoked by the games going on within the arena.

### IV

It was in and out from the Hippodrome world that Justinian—himself the creature of circumstance—found the woman who was to share with him the throne of the Cæsars.

The story of the Empress Theodora's life places novels of adventure and historical romances in that inferior category works of fiction must accept as their doom, when the great maker of human dramas, when the real and the actual teach imagination its lesson of humility.

As keeper of the bears in the great Hippodrome, the father of Theodora saw but one way of making the fortunes of his children: he obtained for them the same chances of showing off their beauty and tricks as were given to his brute beasts. An elder sister having successfully won her place on the boards of the amphitheatre, Theodora's childish cleverness in make-ups, and later, the extreme beauty of her face and form, soon placed the bear keeper's younger daughter among the play-going city's prime favourites.

From the publicity of the circus to the more aristocratic “petits soupers;” from the furnishing to her

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

world of gallants tableaux, whose indecencies we moderns veil with the sonorous title of “ living pictures ; ” from a charity so universal, as the grave Gibbon picturesquely assures us, “ that all Byzantium had tasted of her favours ; ” it was from these ascending degrees of experience that this extraordinary creature was to pass, at twenty or twenty-five, after an adventurous and disreputable tourney through Africa, in the train of a gubernatorial lover, that Theodora was to return to Byzantium to crown her life of adventure with the one that made her immortal.

On her return to her native city, the great courtesan had hidden her momentary weariness of life and men, in a modest house, where, if only for variety, she had decreed her life should be decent and quiet. It was there Justinian met her. What the results of that meeting were to be, all the world knows. After the death of Justin and of his august spouse, Euphemia, when Justinian’s firm hand reached forth to grasp the royal sceptre, when he went in all solemnity of state to Santa Sophia to be crowned, beside him stood the woman he loved. Upon her head as upon that of her parvenu spouse, the patriarch placed the crown of two empires.

From the golden walls of Santa Sophia to the Imperial Tribune opening upon the vast ellipse of the amphitheatre, the two crowned rulers went forth, there to receive the acclamations of their loyal subjects.

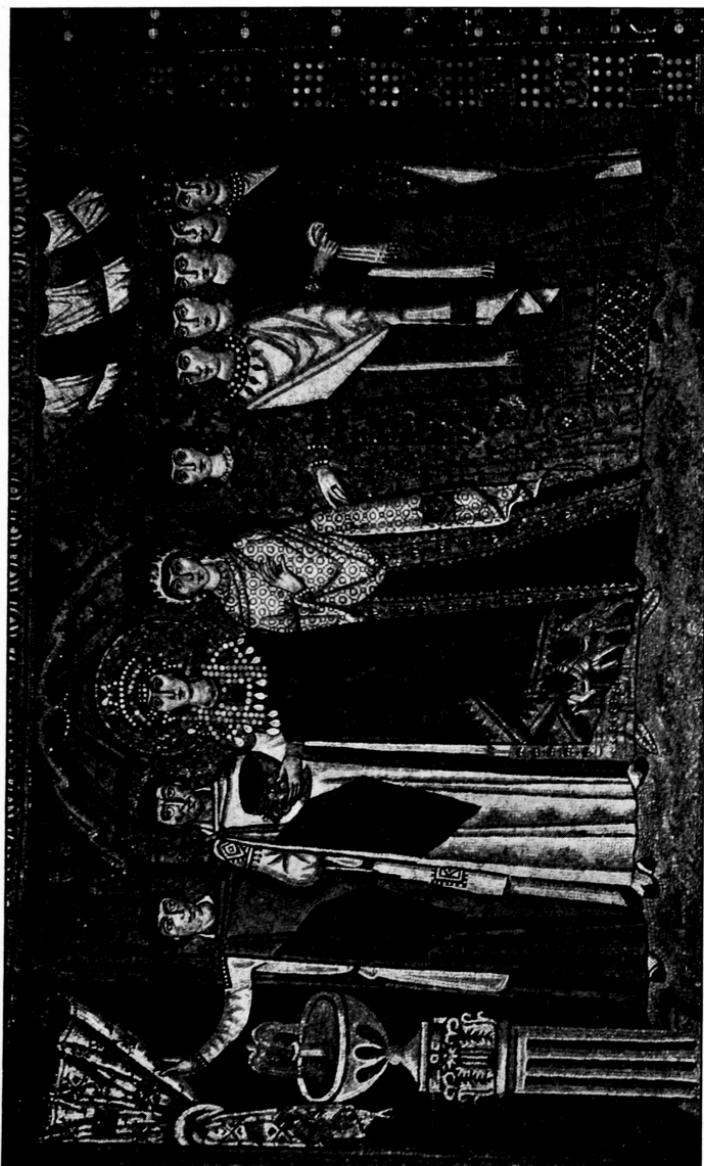
In the subsequent history of Theodora as Empress — as joint-ruler in the vast Empire her clever, unscrupulous but undeniably courageous hand helped Justinian to guide and control — it is not the Theo-

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

dora of Sardou's well-known and misleading tragedy we must accept as the true historic figure. Procopius presents to us an altogether different heroine from the one playing her great rôle in Sardou's drama. That more popularised figure of the vicious Empress lying in her lover's arms, as the populace sing ribald versions of her former notorious life; whose hours of chosen relaxation were spent among the low favourites of her old circus days; and whose tragic death by strangulation in the arcades of the dungeon was arranged some sixteen years before it actually took place, as it was also prolonged to undue length to afford the greatest of all modern actresses the picturesque opportunities of a dramatic death,—this Theodora is the triumphant achievement of an imaginative playwright.

The real Empress of Byzantium understood her world and played her great part with a grander art. The actress who had danced before the eyes of her future subjects; the courtesan whose amours were as well-known as were the names of her lovers; the woman whose brilliant intellect and whose surpassing beauty had won her a throne in the teeth of such a past,—this Theodora realised how royalty, to be respected even outwardly, must be magnificently housed; that to strike and to hold the popular imagination, luxury must go hand in hand, in her court, with the rigours of an etiquette before which the proudest must kneel; and that both to her husband and ruler, as well as to her subjects, she must prove herself equal to every emergency, she must be brave when others were weak, fertile in invention when

*The Empress Theodora and her Court*





## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the cleverest failed ; she must be always queen and Empress, in a word, and never courtesan or plebeian.

To house so splendidly royal an Empress Justinian built the city of the Sacred Palace.

The site of this Palace was not, as many suppose, on Seraglio Point. When Constantine built his earlier Palace he chose as its *enceinte* an immense space of ground between Santa Sophia and the Hippodrome, whose shores touched the Sea of Marmora. This Imperial collection of palaces was destroyed by fire. When Justinian rebuilt the city of palaces he called his own creation the Sacred Palace. Like the Kremlin of the Russian Czars, and like unto the Seraglio of the Sultans, the latter modelled more or less upon the more ancient Imperial city, the Court of Justinian was an immense collection of buildings, churches, palaces, guard-houses, baths, hippodromes, colonnades, and temples, all more or less detached, yet also connected by galleries, terraces, marble stairways, rose gardens and groves of trees, wherein statues were almost as thick as the tree trunks.

In this city of palaces, for whose decoration and adornment the entire known world was laid under contribution — Carthage, Baghdad, Damascus, Rome itself, being despoiled — within this wonder-city three puissant personalities still fill all its stage. Wherever the mental eye roves, whether it be fixed on the Chalcé, the world-famous vestibule of the chief palace, whose walls were tapestried with mosaics and marbles ; — or whether we strive to reconstruct the glory of those splendours of the Consistorion, the audience chamber

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

whose beauty so dazzled the eyes of barbaric kings and chieftains admitted to the Imperial presence that they thought themselves in paradise;—or whether we move toward the terraces overhanging the blues of the Marmora, whose sub-structures one may even yet trace behind the mosque of Sultan Achmet—in such golden palace chambers or in the freshness of great gardens, Justinian's plèbeian yet masterful face, Theodora in the incomparable grace of her slight, perfectly-modelled figure, and Belisarius, the brave, the mighty saviour-general of Rome, conqueror of Goths, Vandals, Africans, Persians,—of all the fighting world of that fighting age, these three figures it is whose complex natures and whose marvellous careers fill the vast, the vanished, yet the still so amazingly real stage of this lost Byzantine world.

In your ardour to reconstruct the great scene, you will be willingly tossed and jolted across the upper Turkish quarter of older Stamboul. Above a medley of rotting ruins, live geese, tombs and gipsy's houses, all there is left of Belisarius' Palace, still lifts aloft noble walls and tooth-worked arches to give to the most powerful military spirit of this decadent Roman world a fitting dwelling.

As you mount from story to story; as you peer into curious corners once the shrines of statues or mosaiced niches for gold or silver lamps; as you trace the still clean-cut outlines of the Byzantine interlacing, along cornice and window-coping, your eyes will, nevertheless, be straying far afield, beyond the perfect arches to the world that is framed below you, in the

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greater arch above. Blue hills ripple above shining waters, and cypress groves blacken the tinted landscape only to be dwarfed to nothingness by the interminable heights of walls the great general saw grow and grow, till they engirdled the splendid city. The conqueror of Carthage, the saviour of Rome, he whose conquests spread from shore to shore of the Mediterranean, and from Persia to northern Italy, how much time had Belisarius to ease his eager, hurried, warlike spirit in the walls of his palace-home, or in the glorious outlook below his great windows? When he came to Byzantium it was either to drag half a world behind him, as captives to crown his triumphal entry into the Hippodrome, or it was to stand and wait, trembling under the smart of possible disgrace, humble as the very least of her subjects, in the antechamber of his imperious, intriguing Empress.

Still another palace in ruins lips, with its sweeping grasses, the watery cheek of an open sea. This "Justinian's Palace," somewhat to the east of the Church of Sergius and Bacchus, was, it is said, the original palace in which the Emperor held his court before his marriage—one which, when building the Sacred Palace, he incorporated within its vast *enceinte*.

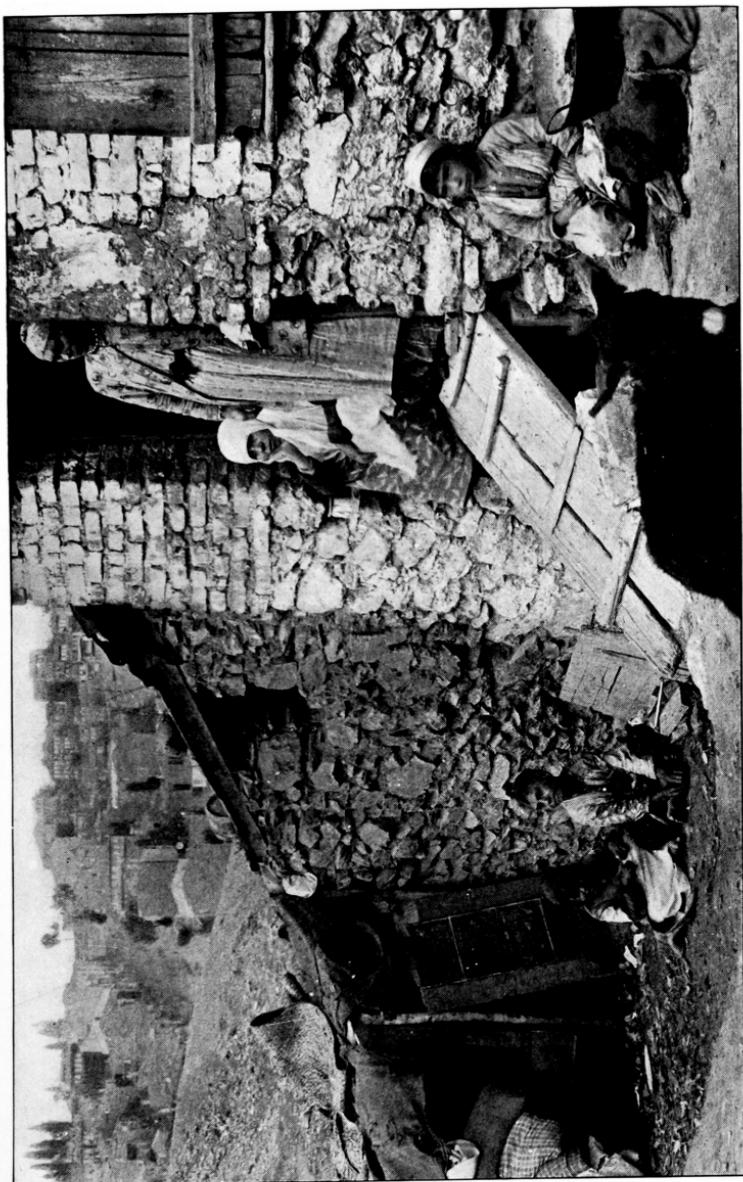
It is only by means of the illuminating pages of history or through the open portals of imaginative fancy, one can place, in those sumptuous palace-chambers, the captivating figure of its wicked yet seductive Empress, and of the relatively more nobly majestic Justinian.

You may follow the life and the daily acts of

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Theodora from her circus days to her almost virtuous end. You may watch her, as she sweeps across the mosaiced floors, her royal robes stiff with jewels whose barbaric splendour enhances the pale olive skin, the wondrous flame of her expressive eyes, the suave delicacy of her features, and her thoughtful brow across which, like a dark arch, the pencilled eyebrows meet ; this ineffably charming, majestic personality escapes both from the pages of history, and from the rigidity and solemnity of her counterfeit presentments in the famous mosaics at Ravenna, to drift towards you nearer and ever nearer, as she steps, with grave and stately grace, to pass through the living line of courtiers, suitors, generals, who lie prostrate on the floor and dare not raise even an eye to scan the royal countenance ; as she prolongs her luxurious repose to ensure the freshness of her skin ; as she refuses, in a single nod of disdain, to receive those among whom are to be counted the greatest personages in Byzantium yet who, morning after morning, are herded together like "a flock of slaves" in her ante-chamber ; as she invents yet more and more stringent laws of etiquette ; and as she leaves all the grandeur and formal splendour of the Sacred Palace to taste the sweets of the ocean breezes in her luxurious villa on the Asian coast. This lover of pomp and sybaritic indulgence becomes still more real when she touches the height of her great heroic moment ; when, with Byzantium in flames, the Imperial palace attacked, when the city was in revolt, and even within the council chamber the mad shouts of the victorious con-

*Gypsies' Houses in old Stamboul*





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spirators dulled the trembling voices of his ministers, urging Justinian to instant flight,—in that supreme moment, Theodora proved herself worthy of her great place and post; for she it was, who, with a courage as sublime as her knowledge of men was profound, cried out to trembling sovereign and to cowardly ministers, “Even though there be no other safety save in flight, I will not fly. Those who have worn the crown must never survive its loss. Never shall I see the day when men cease to salute me as their Empress. If thou wishest to fly, Cæsar, it is well; thou hast money, the ships are ready; the sea open; as for me, I stay. I love this stupendous city. What a shroud is the royal purple!”

Such a woman becomes real, as real as she is great indeed, and, like the courtiers who lined her passage, our heads must bow to her. One comprehends the greatness of such a nature holding fast as linked steel the more vacillating soul of a Justinian. During the whole of her life, Theodora was “God’s gift” to the man and king who, long years after her death, when he wished to take the most solemn of oaths, swore by the name of Theodora to keep the sacredness of his vow.

Dying of cancer in the radiant month of June in 548, this extraordinary woman whose virtues were those of a statesman, and whose vices “were those of her age and her origin,” continues to haunt the imagination as the most contradictory and complex, as she will ever be among the great fascinators, of historic figures. In the phantom city of dead Byzantium her grace and charm, as do also her evil deeds and her

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

crimes, continue to re-create the magic of her presence, and so pervasive and persistent is her impress upon the history of her era, that to say Byzantium is to think of Theodora.

Justinian's reappearance upon the stage of his long-since dead city, and his later apotheosis are no less wonder moving. Six long centuries after the great Emperor had been laid at rest in his tomb in the Church of the Holy Apostles, he emerged from it, the splendour of his appearance such, in all the glory of his Imperial robes and the fresh glitter of its jewels, as to strike with terror the eyes of those Crusaders who, in their conquest of the Constantinople of 1204, had come to rifle kings' tombs as they might a beggar's empty grave. Later still, Justinian the Great was swept, let us hope a second time, to that heaven in which his devout soul so fervently believed, by the immortalising touch of Dante. When the western middle ages relearnt their rights, as men, through Justinian's records of the forgotten Roman laws, the gratitude of his day inspired the poet to place Justinian in his *Paradiso*.

“*Cesare fui, e son Giustiniano . . . A Dio per grazia  
piacque di spirarmi l'alto lavoro.*”

“I was Cæsar, and I am Justinian. It pleased God to inspire me in my great work.”

Great was Justinian himself, for his constructive genius helped to create the state as it is known to modern men, and is ruled over by modern European rulers.

## Chapter XIX

### CONSTANTINOPLE AND SANTA SOPHIA

“THE most beautiful view there is in the world,” was Justinian’s own praise of the site of the city his taste and his love of pomp had made so splendid. With not a single building upon it, with not one stone upon another to mark man’s instinct to put the seal of his handiwork upon the beautiful in nature, still would Seraglio Point have stood to the world as pre-eminent among the perfect strips of land.

Beneath its feet, the liquid floors of three great water-beds are incessantly being laid and re-laid with every changeful hour of the day, and at each fresh touch of the master-colourist, the sun’s light. In patterned mosaics the Sea of Marmora, the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn stretch out beneath this tongue of land that rises slowly, with infinite grace, and with an almost purposeful definiteness, as if the better to view the mountain realm beyond and the jewelled waters below. As the tender slopes of the land lift themselves into the heights that roll upward into hill-tops, these latter, like the immemorially beautiful hills on which “the grandeur that was Rome” was built, rise to flow on and on. In their progressive propor-

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tions there is an impressive symmetry that makes us doubly sure of our standards in the more artificial world of art. In decorating and adorning these hills, the successive races of men who have peopled and beautified them, have been but imitators of those greater laws of force and motion that modelled and shaped them.

Apart from its strategic position, Seraglio Point would, therefore, have captured eyes less keen and sensitive than were those of Constantine and Justinian to the charms, as well as to the value, of a *décor* at once supremely beautiful and grandly spectacular.

No city ever had such a world of on-lookers as had the Constantinople that was built by these two master-builders. Nor was there ever a city more admirably placed to be looked at from all sides. Most cities, to be grasped as a whole, must be viewed either from a distance, be looked down upon from a height, or one must be content with near views or sectional vistas. The Constantinople of Justinian's day, and the Stam-boul of our own, is like a picture that is set upon an easel exactly right as to distance, and that is also perfectly lighted. One may look at it from any and from all points of view. One may see it from a dozen different distances, place it in perspective, or examine it in detail, at closer range.

All the world of the sixth century was eager to look upon this new Rome that was the last sensational wonder of the older world, whose death-throes were faintly to be heard. From the point of view of the visitor and sight-seer, indeed, Constantinople presented

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

better places and easier thoroughfares, for eager eyes and pressing foothold, than did Rome itself. Its near Asiatic and European shores were sharply rising hills offering natural amphitheatrical positions from which to look forth upon the city ; while the passing travel-



*Justinian and his Court*

ling and merchant world, on their way from the Euxine to Greece, Africa, Sicily, or Italy, or returning therefrom, might have long hours for gazing from ships' sides, as they sailed from the Bosphorus into the waters of the Sea of Marmora.

In the least to hope to realise the greatness of Byzantium as these men and women of the sixth century saw it, we must each one of us do a vast amount of re-building on our own account. To reconstruct that vanished city one must be architect,

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

painter, decorator, and historian as well as archæologist. For as no architect since the two geniuses of Asiatic extraction, whose brains conceived the constructive grandeur of Santa Sophia, has ever surpassed in any building that stupendous creation, so neither can the most gifted colourist among historians or word-painters hope to set before you Constantinople as any common sailor saw it from the deck of a Mediterranean coaster, in the century that called Stamboul Byzantium.

The Constantinople of that period was a city of gold and marble set in a huge circlet of stone. In those fighting centuries it was not enough for a city to be the wonder of the world ; it must be made strong before it was safe to make it beautiful. The eye, therefore, would first of all have been caught and held by the monster walls, bastions, citadels, guard-houses, towers, and by the massive inner and outer gates.

These monster fortifications were a city, or rather cities, in themselves ; they were bristling with a vivid, intensely personal life of their own, one which was at once a part and was also separate from the city whose splendour was perpetually growing in beauty, only because of this world that was there to protect it.

In these interminable lines of wall, the furthest gates and bastions were so distant from the heart of Constantinople that the officers and garrisons, detailed for duty therein, complained of their exile “to the country where the world seems asleep.”

Whether you attempt to follow, with the persistent zeal of the ardent archæologist, the fascinatingly un-

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

certain lines of Constantine's original great walls, or whether your zest for looking upon defenses and fortifications on a scale of grandeur for which nothing in Europe has prepared you will be appeased by the long stretches of the miles upon miles of Justinian's



*Underground Cisterns built by Justinian*

monster structures,— still astonishingly erect for ruins reduced to play no more important a rôle than to pose as a picturesque, out-worn fashion in fortifications,— in whatsoever direction the ardour of your curiosity may lead you, your search for these walls in ruins will take you, and speedily, out from the crowded Stamboul thoroughfares to suburban streets, and from these to the rough grasses of untilled fields, to country

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

smells, and to listen to the clear tinkle of sheep's bells. As you walk on and on, beneath the giant shadows cast on the green meadows by tall towers, by monster bastions aslant, tilting as if still tremblingly awaiting the only force capable of moving their firm foundations, that of the quaking earth itself; as the great cities grow more distant; as the hum of bees, and the cutting of the birds' wings in the still air become more and more the sole stir of this quiet world, your sense of companionship with those dead and gone sentinels will quicken within you. You will comprehend what it meant to young hot pulses beating beneath Roman accoutrements to slacken into the monotonous beat induced by the pacing of ramparts; for stout young hearts and brains to be eternally changing guard when, a few short miles away, one knew the market-places to be as crowded with men as it was breathless with news; when Constantine's Forum was as brilliant as a picture, and more exciting than many another show, with all the great of earth to be met beneath its stately porticoes; and above all, when in the Hippodrome the games were on, and all Byzantium was shouting, exulting, sweating, swearing, trembling, thrilling, as the varying chances in the races played with the passion-strung audience as wind with grain,—then indeed was it a positive anguish for the officer of the day to be at his post, and for the sentinel to pace his stretch of wall and listen, fretfully, to the dull droning of bees.

The sympathies of that common sailor I have imagined, as looking forth from his ship's side upon

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the great walls and the wonder city set within them, would have been stirred to quite other feelings than these. Man of the time as such a sailor was bound to be, coasting to and from every port and harbour known to his Mediterranean-bounded world, he would greatly have approved of those walls ; even the glory of the city itself would have come in as an after climax to his commendation. For the spirit that lurked behind every costly house front and within every jewelled palace chamber of that day, had its abiding place in the breast, also, of the bravest among men, whether they were emperors or commoners. The spirit of a great fear looked out from every Roman and Eastern eye, as it also overleapt the stoutest walls.

The exultant cries of the barbarians, shouting across the fortified camps of Illyricum and Thrace, were sounds to make the strongest walls seem thin as a waving leaf. “ We shall take your palaces,— we come to pillage them,” was a menace trembling emperors knew to be the coming, the almost certain horror. For the taunting messages could have been read by the torches the barbarians had lighted along their way ; by the blazing villages burning as if the better to illumine the routed armies, the captured camps, and the long chain of prisoners already doomed to slavery. Before such forces, Justinian and his successors had as little faith in their walls as would a company of raw recruits in our day see aught to fear in this useless masonry. The genius that could reconstruct and govern a practically boundless Empire ; whose military skill could plan campaigns on a scale vast enough to com-

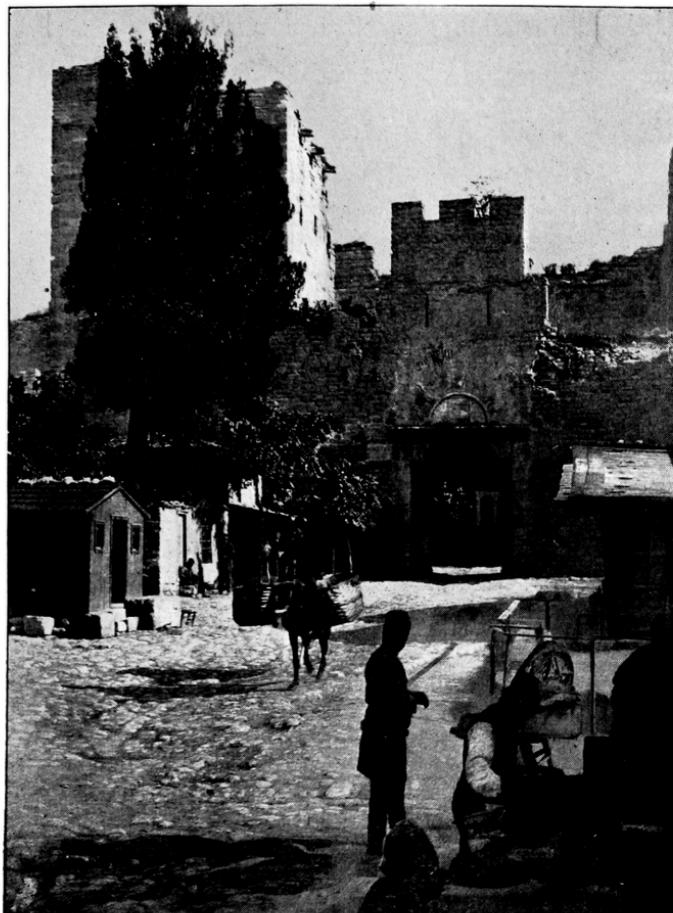
## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

prehend the world of his day ; whose generals brought the spoils of Persia, Africa, Syria, Sicily, Greece, and Italy to his feet ; whose “frontiers stretched from the Danube to Palmyra, to the very limits of the desert ;” and the “boulevards of whose ramparts” lined the coasts of Africa as far as the Columns of Hercules, the shores of the Black Sea, and the classic sites of Greece,—such a master-mind could yet hurry to his palace, therein “to barricade” himself with his intimates on hearing of the descent of the Huns upon the Hellespont.

The panic created by the appearance of the barbarians became the greater in the latter years of Justinian’s reign. The reasons of this growing terror were to be found in two conditions as clear, each one of them, to the dullest Hun or Scythian in the vandal armies as they were to the shrewdest military genius of the age — to Belisarius. Justinian’s overmastering ambition, and his quickly acquired love of regal magnificence, had brought about both of these conditions. He who, at the beginning of his reign, “had aspired to conquer the entire world ;” who, after the conquest of Sicily and Africa, could write, “We have the good hope that God will allow us to reconquer the other countries possessed by the old Romans to the very limits of both oceans,” — this dream of universal empire had been practically realised. The Roman rule of law, of military and religious order, of limitless commercial inter-trading, and of vast administrative sway had been extended, in very truth, from the sea to sea of that day. The lines of walls and fortifications guarding

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this colossal empire made of many of Justinian's provinces an armed camp. "All the country was covered



*The Walls of Justinian*

with citadels ; at each strategical point a fortress arose ; each city was enclosed in its walls ; every highway and

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

route bristled with towers." This line of defense stretched from end to end of the Roman Empire. As vast an extent of frontier exposed constantly to hostile invasion, and consequently in perpetual need of repair as well as of well-armed and disciplined troops, brought about the inevitable results. So colossal a system surpassed human control. The system broke down. Fortresses fell into ruins ; the citadels were captured ; the frontiers of the Empire were left defenseless ; for their defenders were " forced, for their daily bread, to live on the charity of the pious."

Later, Europe, as we now know, was immeasurably the gainer by the magnitude of an ambition that proved to be the opening breach in the Roman world. For out of the ruins and failure of the Roman outposts, mediæval Europe was born. Every citadel, each abandoned fortress, even the toppling walls — each and all these fortified centres, that towered above desolate and savage wastes, had taught the lawless men beyond or beneath them something of the majesty of Roman power, and the dignity of Roman law. Even as the spirit within each one of us passes forth from our frail bodies either to enrich or to impoverish the world, though the soul itself may have its sometimes hours of weakness or its lilt of lofty aspiration, in like manner did the masterful, constructive Roman spirit pass beyond the gold-wrought palace chambers screening the momentarily terrorised Justinian, to teach to savage Hun and to bloodthirsty Vandal the merciful rule of law.

The second cause that drew the predatory hordes

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

southward, nearer and ever nearer to Constantinople, was the same magnetic attraction as draws every rustic of our own day, sweating over spade or plough, to the great centres of our world. Constantinople was the most thoroughly alive, as it was also the most



*Yeni Djam — Mosque by Moonlight*

surpassingly beautiful and the richest city of its time. Its beauty was an unknown language to the barbarian. The riches, however, that filled the capital so that even its streets seemed gold-lined, such splendour was a tongue understood by every Hun and Vandal,— and for the delectable smashing, breaking, and looting of such streets the armies from Germany and Upper Hungary would make as light of crossing the Danube and footing the hills and plains of Thrace as do we, when, in the cushioned compartments of the Orient

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

express, we cover in minutes the spaces Vandal hordes took weeks to traverse.

The city toward which all civilised and savage forces were turned, in that century Justinian made his own, this city of Constantinople rose glittering, not only with colour and gold, but with a marvellous freshness. Justinian had built anew his city, as he had his own fortunes, his kingdom, and as he was to build, later on, the great temple of his era. Even as he had taken happiness from the hand, and counsel from the brain of a common courtesan, whose favours had been as boundless as the Empire she was to help govern, and as Emperor and lover Justinian had made an Empress of this courtesan, setting her, in the majesty of Imperial robes, on the throne beside him, so also did he lift Constantinople from its ruins to deck it and crown it with splendour.

The horrors and disasters following Nika's sedition had left Constantinople in ruins. Passionate builder as he was, during the whole of his reign, Justinian saw in Constantine's city, in fragments at his feet, the opportunity to erect such a capital as should outrival Rome itself.

As the city was to be built all of a piece, so to speak, the plans for taking every possible advantage of as glorious a site were as closely kept in mind as was lavishly prodigal the wealth to be spent in the adornment of the Eastern capital.

When, in the later years of Justinian's long reign, the shipping world looked upon the city that rose out of its stone girdle, from the lips of the gentle shores we

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

know as Seraglio Point up to the distant heights now crowned by Suleyman the Magnificent's mosque,— the eyes of this world saw two cities, one guarding the land, a bristling mass of masonry, out of which grew, towering, the battlemented ramparts, towers, and guard-houses.

From out the sea wall, and upon the Golden Horn, another city uprose. No human eye, at the first outlook, could register all the marvels of beauty before it, as no human pen, since the disappearance of the city, has been able to reconstruct its lost grandeur. Glittering, dazzling, sparkling in golden-tinted splendour, the very freshness of the city's new marbles and its lately laid-on mosaics and colours dazed the eye, making clear impressions and accurate registration of its character and buildings the more difficult.

After the seeing eye had become used to the dazzle of the faery-like spectacle, the features of certain of its great structures defined themselves, with impressive dignity. The delicate pallor of the more intimate dwellings of the Sacred Palace first cast their blanching tints upon the Sea of Marmora. Out of the bloom of terraces and tree forests, the more gorgeous roofs and wall-surfaces of the grander halls and state buildings within this Imperial city uprose, in massed magnificence. As a contrast to the pomp of the Emperor's city, there was the more sacred, but scarcely less splendid glory of the thirty and more basilicas Justinian had built. Each one of these basilicas was different in design to the other, showing a fresh

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

arrangement of marbled wall-surfaces and precious metals. The lofty Thermes of Arcadius ; Constantine's Forum ; the vast ellipse of the Hippodrome ; the colonnades and porticoes ; the army of statues whose snowy marbles, tinted surfaces, jewelled eyes, and golden shields made the sky-line as crowded as were the market-places with their human figures,—such were the masses that rolled themselves upward to meet the aerial grace of the Great Aqueduct.

To the life of the world of men filling the streets of this wonder city, every historian, from Procopius to Gibbon, and the very latest French authorities, have devoted many pages, their talent and genius preserving for us, at the very least, the imaged presentment of a world at once so near, and one yet so immeasurably far away from our own. The spirit that lived itself out in those mosaiced streets, and in the company of that multitude of statues, was so strangely brutal, yet so decadent in its refinements ; it was so lustful of power, yet so rebellious to discipline ; so pagan in its insistent demands of the things of the flesh ; so Roman in its love of pomp, and in its passion for shows and games, and yet so humanly timid in its fear of the barbarian hordes, as it was also so very early Christian in its fierce self-flagellations, its austerities, and its renunciations.

In thinking of the complex, multiform character of this Byzantine world, one begins to understand and to know the men and women who lived in Constantinople. The crowds filling the market-places were very like those that crowded the squares and open spaces

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

of the Italian cities of the Renaissance, — like them in their spirit of unrest, in their turbulent love of a quarrel or a fight ; like them also in their passionate



*An Hungarian Gipsy*

keenness for intrigue, and their skill in conspiracy ; unlike them, in their Byzantine unreclaimed savagery in matters of sport. Impressionable as an Italian, the

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

Byzantine was more frankly brutal ; he could still find the thrill of an exquisite satisfaction in looking upon the burning of human flesh ; the torture of a heretic, in the arena, was to Byzantine eyes what the goading of wild beasts had been to Romans in their Colosseum.

Within the colonnades and porticoes the more aristocratic world of Constantinople sauntered to exchange its critical, fastidious comment on the shape and plan of the last new basilica ; on the news from Belisarius' or Narses' armies, in Africa, Italy, Sicily, or Rome itself. Under the arcades of the Royal Portico every philosophy, heresy, science, theology, political and economic question was as frequently aired, as the disputants proved their own delight in such conversations already given the seal of classic dignity by their greater predecessors in the groves of Academe.

To the éclat of Imperial magnificence the sharp, telling contrasts of human misery were added. As captive kings were led in triumph around the *spina* of the great Hippodrome, to proclaim what the hero of the reign — what Belisarius had done in bringing fresh kingdoms under Roman sway, so in the streets, swarthy Africans, Nubians, richer-skinned Moors and Arabians knelt or grovelled at the feet of the rich, offering their squalor and the pathos of their hunger-strained eyes to the listless indifference of their captors.

Never since this sixth century has there been a time when the human spirit, in its multiform capacities and contradictions, has played out to the last limits of its

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

energies, and with as spendthrift a passion, its contrasting rôles of worldling and devotee, of debauchee and ascetic, of warrior and monk, of lusting Mæcenas and the man of the cell — living on husks and beating his flesh into ribbons. The holy flame of an intense,



*In Stamboul*

and passionate longing for spirituality and for the leading of the life which alone, it was believed, could incite to such unworldliness, this holy flame burnt into the very souls of the men and women of that century so much nearer to Christ than is our own.

The lines of the great fortresses were scarcely longer than were the lines of convent walls. From the outermost confines of the Eastern and African deserts, to Byzantium, to Rome, to the most distant Gallic provinces in Normandy, men were forsaking

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

the lusts of the flesh and the pomps of life, to immure themselves in monasteries as large and as densely peopled as were the cities from which they had fled. "These citizens of heaven" were to be counted by the millions. Their cries and chants, their vigils and self-punishments, their prayers and austerities were the impressive background, tending heavenwards, against which the gorgeous foreground of civic and court life massed its sumptuously clad worldlings, its architectural splendours, and its brilliant war-like figures.

Justinian was himself a living, vivid embodiment of the conflicting dualities of his era. He was its most puissant, as he was its most illustrative representative. The flames of a pious, devout spirit—as spirituality was adjudged in his day—burned beneath the mantle of his royalty. He was a passionate son of the "only church," as he was also a precursor of those grander Pontiffs who, in Papal Rome, demonstrated in regal Medicean prodigality, the principle that God's representative should surpass all earthly kings in state and pomp.

As Justinian's piety led him to demonstrate his fervour rather by grandeur of acts than by following the loftier examples of those, his brother princes, who sacrificed temporal power to gain heavenly crowns, the character of his acts of devotion, as well as the form taken by his ecclesiastical ambitions, were in conformity with his nature. His reign was to be one immortalised by the proofs of his piety, in stone, in solid gold and marble; by the building of such churches

## *IN THE PALACES OF THE SULTAN*

“as none ever saw.” The multitude of these, and of the convents he, the Emperor, and Theodora built, was to astonish the world. As in the most minute details of his administrative, diplomatic, and military rule Justinian’s constructive genius was apparent, so was also his over-weaning ambition to be supreme head and chief of each and all of the departments controlling his vast Empire. We find this same informing passion for detail entering into his *Religious Code*. From the ceremonies necessary to the proper investiture of a Bishop, to the rules of conduct in the most obscure convent in an African desert, Justinian’s laws and *dicta* traversed the whole ecclesiastical area of his spiritual kingdom. And over that invisible kingdom, with its visible celebrants and earthly priests’ world, Justinian proposed to be head and front. The first among his subjects to bow the knee to Rome, “Head of all holy churches,” the Emperor was also first to crown himself supreme dictator in the religious affairs of his great kingdom.

The memory of all this it is well to keep in mind when one enters the holy, golden world of Santa Sophia. For as Justinian was the most completely representative figure of his age, so also does Santa Sophia, this greatest and most beautiful of God’s Temples, attest, not alone the constructive genius of that long ago century, but it also typifies its grandeur of spirit, as well as its infinite patience in elaboration of detail, and its knowledge of the importance of the apparently insignificant, both in life and in the art of building.

It is the great and peculiar privilege of Santa Sophia

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to stand as the sole completely perfect monument of this lost Eastern Roman world. To enter Santa Sophia is to step from our own world and century into the heart of that Eastern Rome. For the very soul of Rome and of the East have passed into the great temple.

There is no single worldly or spiritual element that went to the making of the forces that swayed the men of Justinian's Empire we may not find written, in indelible letters of beauty, in "The Great Church." The splendour and the gravity ; the gaiety and the dignity ; the pomp of display, and the simplicity of a delicate delight in reticence ; the loftiness of a most daring audacity, and the power to hide the effort by the ease genius alone permits,—these and a hundred other qualities passed, with the unconscious grace of complete self-betrayal, into the one structure that must stand for all Byzantium. For such is the supreme as it is also the most exquisitely satisfying of the qualities of a great work of genius ; not only does its beauty and perfection absorb and enrapture us, but through such a masterpiece, be it a book, a statue, or a temple, the life of its day is as clearly to be read as though it were living before you.

Therefore it is that, as you pass beyond the intensely bright streets of Stamboul to enter the scarcely less brilliant world of Justinian's Temple, you are instantaneously transported to the great and mighty Byzantine capital. At last as you stand beneath that soaring dome you are truly "seeing" the New Rome— you are thrilling to it !

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The first, as I think will be also the last, impression one receives from the immensity of space enwalled in



*A Fellabine — An Egyptian*

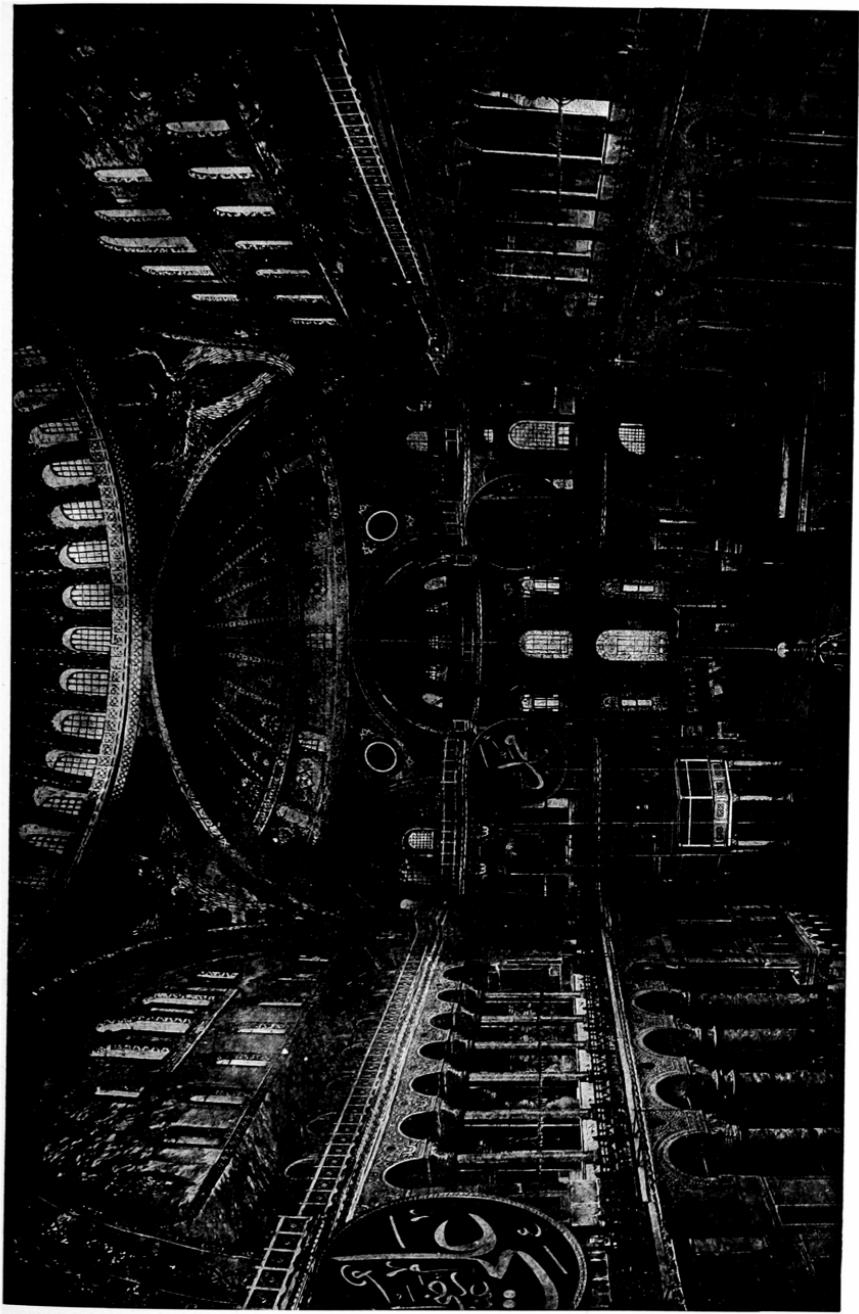
Santa Sophia, is one's instantaneous recognition of its being the great masterpiece of creative genius in

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ecclesiastical architecture. No other church or temple presents a perfection at once as complete and comprehensive. Vast as are its proportions you are no more critical of its tremendous size than you are of the limitless expanse of sky-spaces. Infinite, exquisite, and inexhaustible as is the wealth of detail everywhere apparent, such elaboration is felt to be as completely and inherently a part of the structural whole as are the grasses and leaves of a forest insensibly accepted as the decorative adjuncts of a wood-world.

It was indeed from the imperious demand for the new, for the super-sumptuous in decorative splendour, that this new art in temple-building drew its life-breath.

When Justinian's decision to erect a church, "such as since Adam has never been seen, and one which hereafter shall never be seen again," the two architects to whom he confided the planning and erection of that which was to be the crowning architectural act of his life, as well as his spiritual offering to his God,—these artists had presented to them the most difficult of all tasks set before genius. The new temple must not only surpass all others previously built, it must also be an absolute novelty, both in structural plan and in design. Above all else, it must offer to the Byzantine world, already grown weary of luxurious pomp, and more or less blasé in its appreciation of merely sumptuous beauty, entirely original and undreamed-of combinations in colour-effects, in carvings, and in decorative ensemble. The grandeur of the edifice, in other words, must, when finished, stand unequalled in order to excite to awed rapture eyes fatigued with the splendour and glitter of Constantinople.



*Interior of Santa Sophia*



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Justinian's own dream of the magnitude of the projected temple was to be gauged by the area of ground he dedicated to this vast undertaking. The site already occupied by a basilica built by Constantine, restored by Theodosius, and finally fired by the torches of the revolting populace in 532, was a site altogether too limited in extent for the colossal temple that was to be dedicated to "the Divine Wisdom." Innumerable were the adjacent houses and gardens bought, at fabulous sums, to furnish ground-space for the new church.

The two architects chosen for the great work were Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus. Under these masters one hundred lesser architects, with each a hundred workmen as their subordinates, made up the army of ten thousand artisans, masons, carvers, stone-cutters, mosaic-inlayers, and master-supervisors who worked, five thousand on the right side and five thousand on the left side, according to the plan given by an angel, who had appeared to the Emperor in a dream. The supernatural visitations were, indeed, as numerous as they were opportune, during the erection of the edifice. An angel took the form of a brilliantly clad eunuch who, with the marvellous directness characteristic of angelic commands, ordered a boy in sole charge of the mason's tools, to betake himself quickly to the workmen and order them back to their toil, to hasten the completion of the building. The white-robed eunuch meanwhile promised faithfully, even taking pains to swear by the Divine Wisdom, he himself would stand guard over the church until the lad

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returned. The gleaming eunuch-angel still stands at his post; Santa Sophia is still under the spirit guard of one of God's angels, for the boy was never permitted to return. Justinian, on hearing of the mysterious apparition, and, on searching for his visible shape and no eunuch in white robes being found, quickly decided on its being a messenger from upper heaven.

A more earthly, but equally effective, presence within the edifice during its erection was the portly figure of Justinian himself. Justinian hovered over his church indeed with untiring, unwaning enthusiasm. His coarsely-clad form — for it was his custom to don homely linens on his visitations to the world, where the work of masons and stone-cutters had created a perpetual over-hanging dusty cloud,— the Emperor's somewhat heavily moulded figure was one almost as omnipresent as were those of the two architectural geniuses to whom he ventured, with regal daring, to proffer suggestions.

His passion for its quick and speedy completion made him forget the needs of middle age for rest. He gave up his nap of the day to hurry his workmen. Outside of the temple, the Emperor's energies were no less inexhaustible. The entire world must be made tributary to the "Great Church." The marble quarries of the whole of the East and West were ransacked for porphyry, for *vert antique*, for black, blue, emerald-toned, or indeed any marble that could enhance the polychrome effects that were to be one among the chief elements in producing a wondrous colour combination. Antiquity itself was to hand over its rich-

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est treasures. The Temple of the Sun, in Rome, sent light porphyry columns; Athens, the Troad, and



*Gallery and Arcade in Santa Sophia*

Ephesus were despoiled of others—of marbles no longer procurable, or those to whom age and even

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weather had given a peculiar lustre and polish. The Temples of Isis and Osiris, of Pallas Athene, of Phœbus of Delos, of the Sun and the Moon at Heliopolis, each of these—and how many others?—were despoiled to furnish Phrygian marbles streaked with rose-tints, black Celtic marbles with their snowy veins, Egyptian starred granite, and pillars of Saitic porphyry.

The walls and arches of the monstrous edifice were of brick, revetted with marbles. The combinations of colour-effects in the placing of these marbles constitute one of the chief glories of the temple. The artistic grouping and the infinite variety of the marvellous stone in-laying with which the walls and arches of Santa Sophia are covered, is one of the most marvellous works of human taste. These walls still gleam with the lustre of velvet, as they also still present to us a patterning unequalled, save those executed by the same cunning Eastern fingers that weave, upon sombre and rich backgrounds, the delicate colour-effects in the carpets we have christened by the name of those who, living in the intense glare of the sun, have stolen the secrets of the mystery and the gloom of its shadow.

For the perfection of this marble panelling we are indebted, as has been the case in so many great artistic developments, to pure chance. Justinian's own desire was to cover even the walls with gold. Had his wishes been carried out, Santa Sophia would have lost an element of grandeur no glitter of golden mosaics could have replaced.

Next in point of novelty to these marble wall patterns was the infinite variety in polychrome effects,

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yielded by the contrasting colours in the columns and pillars. The architects designed to play a colour-scheme with porphyries, with *vert antique*, with white and black and all the other known tints in stone, such as had never before been known, and such as has never since been surpassed. Against the depth of the wall tones, each one of these perfectly chosen columns finds its colour-plane in perfect harmony with its background. Above the jewel-like shafts, burnished to reflect light as well as to yield up its own inner veinings and traceries, the ornate Byzantine capitals were laced with carvings. Into such carvings, ivory, jade, gold, silver, mother-of-pearl, and other precious stones are set with the delicacy and elaboration of the goldsmith's art. Gold did, indeed, cover a large portion of this marvellous temple. The ceiling of the esonarthex, as well as the whole of the upper walls and the great central dome of the church, these are all of golden mosaic.

The crowning novelty in Santa Sophia is its gigantic dome. It is now generally admitted that it was in Persia the two Byzantine architects found their inspiration for this their greatest architectural triumph. From whatever source they may have drawn their model, their method of working the architectural *motif* made it their own. Once the vast scaffolding removed, and the dome lifted into space by the constructive genius of Anthemius and Isidorus, it was seen to soar to a height almost as vast, and to swing aloft with a grace as light, as the outer ferment itself. In lieu of the sixteen windows which pierced

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the base of this original monster dome, we now find forty in the second dome constructed by Isidorus the younger, after the falling in of Anthemius's and Isidorus's earlier masterpiece from the effects of the fatal earthquake of 558. The entire church is, indeed, most gloriously lighted. In its upper galleries, in the four great arches supporting the central dome, groups of upper and lower, of smaller and larger windows let in a flood of light. This lighting was in itself not one of the least original of the inspirations of the two master builders. For with the torrent of sunlight poured upon the glistening marbles and the gold of mosaics, the spaces of air enclosed within the walls of Santa Sophia are as luminous as are those of the outer world. "God's House" seems thus to have its own luminary, "to give birth to light rather than to receive it." Nor was this light permitted to fade with the day. On the great festival nights, the church was as brilliant as a conflagration, signalling with its red, rose, and green lights, to sailors far out at sea, how the nativity of the Virgin or a saint's birth was celebrated in "the most glorious of churches." Below the great dome these rose tinted lights were seen to be swinging in mid-air from clusters of aerial lanterns, from candelabra in the shape of trees from which flames issued as though they were flowers of light, and from lamps that were shaped like ships sailing the seas of space.

Upon the high altar, the ciborium, and the tabernacle Justinian lavished the last, final prodigalities of his devotion and the pomp of his taste. The tabernacle was of pure gold; precious stones were strewn as thick as

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were the costly enamels, and its four silver-gilt columns carried aloft the dome, with its massive gold cross. This cross, huge as it was, seemed insignificant as contrasted with the gigantic cross that stretched its symbolic arms across the summit of the great cupola with its skyey background dusty with stars.

When, after its short five years and ten months of building, this masterpiece of human creative genius was pronounced completed ; when, up to the entrance door, opening upon the Augustinian Court, Justinian's triumphal chariot, with its four horses, came to their rest to let the Emperor descend that he might be the first to enter the “Great Church,” at the doors of which stood the Patriarch and all the lesser clergy, in the ecclesiastical state of their grand vestments, waiting to receive their Emperor ; and when we follow the central, the royally garbed, but very humanly emotional figure of that son of a Macedonian widow, whose comprehensive genius had grasped not only a vast Empire, but who could also enter into and rule in the more elect domain of art, I think each and every one of us can thrill, as was thrilled to its innermost fibre this mighty Eastern monarch's soul, when, confronted with the stupendous glory of his finished temple, he rushed, with arms widely extended, to fling himself beneath the towering dome, as the great cry of his joy and triumph broke from him : “Glory be to God who has deemed me worthy to accomplish so great a work. O Solomon, I have surpassed thee!”

Such will be the inner shout of triumph of every soul who bends, in awe and wonder in his or her turn,

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beneath the soaring cupola. For in such moments of uplifted admiration, in contemplating the grander achievements of man, each mortal proclaims his own heritage in that immortal spark of divinity we call genius.

In your closer study of the more minute details of Santa Sophia's peculiarities of structure and ornamentation, you will spend days. Each column, and the capital of each, will bid you linger, will tempt you to delay wandering into the marvel of galleries, into nearer arcades from whose depths of semi-jewelled gloom endless effects are to be had, under as changeful lights. You will be taken to the upper gallery where Theodora and her ladies crowded to hear the mass of the day; you will be shown the Sultan's seat or Tribune opposite the Mihrâb; the "Shining Stone," and the "Sweating Column" the latter emitting the miraculous damp said to cure strange and loathsome diseases,—these and the more sacred cradle of Jesus, as well as the basin in which he is said to have been washed—both from Bethlehem—together with the equally sacred relics, from the Moslem standpoint, of a prayer-carpet of the Prophet, and the more bloody seal of the five-fingered hand said to have been the imprint of the Turkish conqueror when, from his horse, he viewed the terror-stricken Christian world at his feet, flown to the refuge of the great sanctuary,—from each and all of these you will turn to fill your eyes and soul, again and again with the glory of the world beneath the golden dome. The "mystical city of God" will seem to have found its earthly dwelling within

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these luminous, soaring arches. The light that pours itself so triumphantly through the hundreds of windows is no less golden-hued than will be your unsated rapture.

A part at least of the impressive grandeur of Santa Sophia is due to its having copied one of the simplest effects daily produced in nature. In a forest, or even in a grove, we feel ourselves surrounded by a pleasing depth of shade. Even gloom, when tenderly lighted, is felt to be an agreeable element in nature's picture. From the encompassing greens and deeper shade the eye is insensibly carried skyward. And heaven's arch seems doubly blue, and the firmament more gloriously lighted, because of the tender gloom of our forest enclosure.

Thus it is in the vast marble world of Santa Sophia. One feels the mystery and the sombre depths of the surrounding marbles to be like unto forest gloom leading the eye upward. Aloft, beneath the great dome, the light is doubly glorious because two great geniuses looked forth upon God's ways of lighting his world, and they but humbly copied Him.

The very spirit of Deity seems to be enthroned in this goldenly lighted realm of Santa Sophia. As the whole world was made tributary to the building of the sacred edifice, so all the gods worshipped by men seem resolved into Him we call the One and only God. Diana and Apollo, whose temples were despoiled, would woo the Greek devotee to find them reincarnate in the radiant, dancing air-spaces. The Egyptian Isis, the columns of whose far-away shrine were stolen

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to help the propping of a Christian temple, would smile mysteriously, as she lifted her sphinx's eyes to the dimmed mosaics of her more sacred sister, the Divine Mother with the Christ Child, in lieu of the child Horus, on her arm. And Catholic and Protestant alike, as well as the kneeling Moslems, whose chanting voices ring in your ear, will continue to find the spirit of their Maker enshrined in the midst of this His House. In so holy a temple the warring of sects is stilled. In very truth, only God is great, and all mankind we feel is wholly kin. For it is the gift of genius to carry, upon its soaring wings, the spirit into the Divine Presence.

## Chapter XX

### THE MOSLEM CITY

#### I

**A**S you enter the Porta Basilica through which Justinian and all his successors have passed, you will find a certain number of detached, devout figures kneeling, or sitting, upon prayer-rugs. At your first glance you will feel these worshippers, in their Eastern garb, to be in perfect harmony with the solemnity, as well as with the richness, of their surroundings; for the marbles and mosaics of the esonarthex strike the first chords of those polychrome colour effects you are to find increasing in beauty at every step of your onward progress.

The heads of these praying Mussulmans bow and bend; their brows touch the floor. Their lips move, and eyes as well as figures will be found fixed towards a certain point in the great building.

Within the vast nave these detached figures will thicken in numbers; wherever the eye rests, praying figures of men may be seen at any, and at all times, of the day. At certain hours they will rise to move forward, they will form in long lines, silently, in perfect order. And in the nave as in the narthex the line will be found to be aslant, for Santa Sophia not

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having been built for a mosque, the Moslem rule ordains that the invisible geographical, and not the actual architectural direction, shall fix the eyes and place the figures of the faithful at a slight angle from the apsidal centre.

An Imâm will silently, with swift grace, meanwhile, have appeared to take his place before the slanting line. His voice will presently break forth into high, chanting tones; and to this chant of prayer the line of worshippers will respond in perfect unison. The aisles and nave of the vast edifice will be filled presently, with the echoing murmur of strong men's voices. For a half-hour the antiphonal chant will rise and fall, will ebb in quavering treble to grow into the strong crescendo of deep male voices, rising to a sudden climax, in resurgent volume. All the while the standing figures of the worshippers will be bending, bowing, hands will be clasped across breasts or widely extended, as also at certain intervals, the figures will be seen to drop simultaneously upon their knees, with an astonishing ease and softness, that they may touch the ground with their foreheads.

Presently, the half-hour of prayer over, the line breaks as silently as it had formed. The priest, he also has vanished. The praying Mussulmans,—all those strong-featured, dark-eyed, youthful-browed, and grey-bearded worshippers who have left shop, counting-house, bazaar, or home to meet together in this their worship, which makes of every man a brother,—each of these departs unto his own place. Three times each day; however, the Moslem wor-

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shipper returns to touch elbows with he knows not whom, to face the God of whom he is so very sure.

Even when there are no chanting Mussulmans invoking the mercy of their Maker, Santa Sophia, as is also every one of the two hundred and thirty mosques in Constantinople, is full of sound. It is a softened sound, one that is at once pleasing and also peculiar, with its semi-barbaric lilts and its slightly nasal raspiness. From certain corners of the mosques, beneath canopied recesses, as also in the mastaba,—the upper raised platforms,—the green turbans and motley-hued vests and scarfs of the softas may be counted upon as inseparable adjuncts to the glow of Persian glass and to the glint of colored marbles. These seated figures of the softas communicate a perpetual motion, as their high voices also contribute an unending song, to the otherwise great peace and quiet of the Turkish mosque-world. Swaying, now forwards, now backwards, quickly, with an astonishing rhythmic precision,—the more remarkable because of its duration,—these softas are seen to be incessant in these their bowings and bendings; for this peculiar motion, according to Moslem tradition, is supposed to accelerate the action of both mind and memory, as it also precludes the possibility of being overcome by the dreaded stupor so feared by these students during the years devoted to the committal of the Sacred Book to memory.

II

You will insensibly pass from the more purely superficial outlook upon the unfamiliar rites of this peculiar worship, to one which you will find at once suggestive and illuminating. From the spectacular and the picturesque, you will proceed to strive to surprise the inner, the deeper meaning underlying the outward observances of a religion which has swayed, and that sways still, so many millions of the human race — a third of it, in fact.

The simplicity and directness, as well as the indifference and superiority to all external aids, of this Moslem worship, — this is the first of your deeper readings. Those bending, bowing figures have thus taught you your first lesson. These Moslem worshippers approach their God with a straightforward directness as surprising as it is impressive. The profound sincerity of this faith of Islam is thus affirmed, with tremendous positiveness, by its recognition of the equality of men before their Maker. Even as men must rise from their graves at the last day, to find themselves in strange company on their way to be judged at the Eternal Bar, thus do these Moslems gather from all quarters of their busy Constantinople streets to confront their God ; once beneath the mosque enclosure, they move together beneath its arches, as they might in the presence of Him whose praises they sing, and to whose existence and unity they attest five times a day. Here in Santa



*A Softa with Pupils*



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Sophia, as in all their mosques, these “sons of the faithful” seem to have found their One God, who “is in the midst” of his great Temple.

The entire absence of the spectacular, or of the mystical, in this Moslem worship robs it, to lovers of such, of all emotional effect. But of a certain sort of incense Santa Sophia is full, as it is of gold. The incense of devout souls seems to pervade the vast edifice.

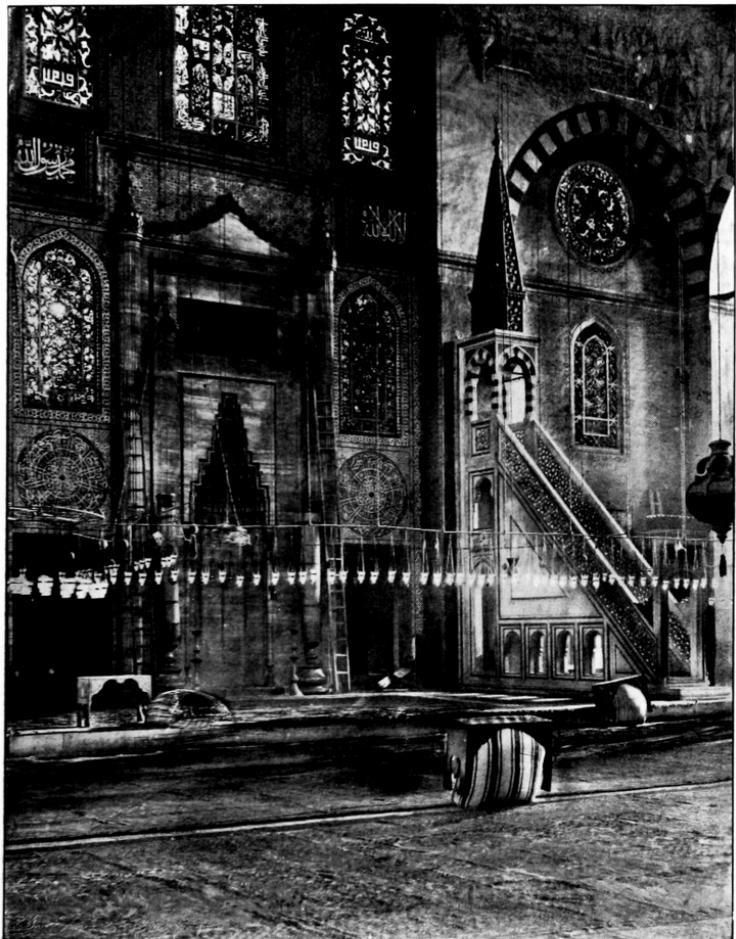
Of the uncompromising character of this fierce, intense Moslem belief, the nudity of Santa Sophia proclaims, with impressive insistence. The Turk, as all the world knows, in turning Santa Sophia into a mosque, mercilessly sacrificed his appreciation of certain features of its beauty to his religious convictions. The spectacular splendours of the Greek worship have vanished for ever; gone are the golden tabernacle, the ciborium, the magnificence of the high altar, the mosaic heads of mystical prophet, and the grouped figures of aureoled saints. These are hidden behind disfiguring screens of matting, covered with plaster. The light that will still permit you to trace the paling outlines of the Virgin and Child, of St. John the Baptist, of the mosaic portrait busts of Justinian and Theodora,—such a light must be of a great and peculiar brightness, for what Moslem fingers could do to obliterate such sacrilegious presentment of the human form has been done.

The carved minber,—the pulpit to which each Friday the priest still mounts, sword in hand, to preach between the two flags, symbols of vic-

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tory and conquest,—the extension of the faith, exhortation to good works, and increase in spiritual belief; the mihrâb, the deep, richly sculptured recess, indicating the exact direction of Mecca; the huge green shields in the pendentives, bearing, in monster inscriptions—the letters of which are said to be thirty feet high—the names of God, the Prophet, and the four companions of the Prophet—these are the chief Moslem substitutes for the glory of the Patriarchal throne, long since the spoils of the conqueror, for the jewelled shrines of saints, and for that marvellous curtain-screen of gold encrusted with precious gems, for which latter the Crusaders could find no better use than wantonly to tear to shreds. The four famous horses that stood in the apse the Moslems never saw. The Crusaders had taken them, two centuries before, a long journey, one that was to end in Venice. From the façade of St. Mark's these famous steeds seem, in their life-like lightness and grace, to be ever eagerly springing forward, as if longing to retrace their steps, that they might find once again their true home under the mosaics of Santa Sophia.

It is rather in the exterior, than in the interior of Santa Sophia, that we are to find the most radical changes in the aspect of the great church. The original form of the edifice is almost entirely obscured by annexes, additions, and courts which have gradually transformed this greatest and purest of basilicas into a conglomeration of buildings which have little or no architectural unity, and no beauty save that which is inseparable from imposingness of mass. The four



*Mibrâb and Minber in Suleyman the Magnificent's Mosque  
(Sofia's Cushion and Kôran Table)*



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minarets erected at the four sides of the great pile are the chief external features, which with the dome, make of Santa Sophia as a whole, still the most impressive edifice in Constantinople. These minarets are noticeably solid at their base, soaring, with an almost unequalled grace, into the lofty carved parapets circling below their tapering spirals.

Once a year, however, something of that older, lost Byzantine grandeur returns to the glowing interior of Santa Sophia. Hundreds of chandeliers, from whose circular metal rings hang innumerable crystal lamps,— small, oval-shaped, of most dainty shape and of an exceeding lightness,— these chandeliers and their pendant oil-lamps are found suspended under every arcade, gallery, recessed alcove, and in all the smaller and larger aisles of the church. These tiny lamps communicate, even by day, an extraordinary lightness and grace to the entire interior. Such is the delicacy of these crown-shaped chandeliers, they appear rather to have been suspended from their invisible wires for ornamental, than for utilitarian purposes.

When, in the Ramazan and in the Seven Holy Nights of Islam, all Constantinople is as bright as day; when from every mosque; from sacred, civic, or palatial buildings, the flames of millions upon millions of tapers proclaim the long fast is over and the Baïram is near, then once again does the former splendour of the great temple of temples seem to have returned, unto it; for through its countless windows the soft blaze, from its thousands of lighted lamps, carries the mighty grandeur of its outlined proportions to every seeing eye, and

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far out at sea, though the lights are neither now rose-hued nor do they burn in gilded ships nor in silver-hung candelabras, yet does the sailor, making his port, see the awesome majesty of Santa Sophia set in its blazoning aureole of light.

### III

The presence of these Moslem worshippers in Santa Sophia, and their proprietary rights therein, are due to three causes, each of which has been as potent a shaping influence in the future history of the Turkish people as though each of them, severally, had been the carefully thought-out project of the greatest of statesmen. These three factors in Turkish history have been a certain admonition — the command indeed — of the Prophet ; the romantic adventures of a band of nomads, and the military daring of a youth of twenty-three.

“ Seek ye the Seven-hilled City ! ” was the command that issued from Mahomet’s lips, after he had himself felt the intoxication of conquest. The capture of the whole of Arabia could not suffice to the unquenchable ambition of a religious reformer and warrior who, before his death, began to realise, with the grasp of his great mind, the future possibilities of the spiritual, as well as the earthly sway, that lay before his followers.

Man of the interior though he was, Mahomet had that instinct for control of sea-power that seems intuitive in born leaders of men. William of Normandy had his love for, and belief in the pre-eminence

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given those who are nearest to the sea, by direct descent. Mahomet was drawn to the waters circling about the Eastern City as irresistibly as has Russia seen in them the one prize, above all others, she chiefly covets. There was no promise rich enough, within the province of this giver of spiritual gifts, to tempt men to jeopardize life that they might win the glory of adding the New Rome to the cities of the new faith. The first Moslem army to enter Constantinople should have absolution *en masse*. To obtain this coveted remission of sin was the waking dream of every Moslem soldier for eight hundred long years !

This length of time was to elapse, between the promise and its fulfilment. Meanwhile, out of the realm of pure chance a romantic episode took place, on the banks of the river Euphrates. And you and I, and all of our world, are still watching the strange developments that have grown out of the spirited adventure that befell a wandering band of Turks who, with their flocks and women, were pushing their nomadic journeying southward, toward Anatolia. This band of four hundred and forty warriors had been sent forth upon their travels at a quicker pace than common, because of the pressing hordes behind them, of the Mongols. This was about the year A. D. 1250.

Near Angora, however, the pastoral band, with their warrior leaders, came to a halt. Women might rest, and the flocks could come to comfortable grazings, for the land was good. The four hundred and forty warriors, however, went farther afield. Wandering thus, they came upon the fairest sight in all the

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world to the eyes of fighters — they looked forth upon a battle-field. Who these fighters were, what the cause of the difference, Ertoghrul, the leader of the Turkish band, neither knew nor cared. In those more primitive days a fight was a fight. Its cause was a detail. Horses and men felt the stirrings of battle. With an inborn, chivalrous gallantry, Ertoghrul flew to the rescue of the weaker party. The painter Schrerer will help you to picture the scene of those flying horsemen, their supple figures one with their flying steeds, their arms held high, scarfs and turbans white with the dust of their passionate onrush.

The dashing nomads won the day. The unknown horsemen displayed a skill in the use of their weapons, and an intuitive, as well as a disciplined, capacity for military manœuvres, Turkey's neighbours find as amazing in our day as did the Seljûk Sultan of Iconium. After the victory, the Sultan turned to learn the names of his rescuers. Ertoghrul presented himself as he who was known as "The Right-Minded Man."

The "Right-Minded Man" was to start a long chain in history's coil. To follow the fortunes of this gallant starter of Turkey's destiny throughout his eventful career would be as impossible, within the limitations of a book aiming solely to present certain suggestive sketches of some of the more dramatic and eventful historic episodes, as it would be to attempt to condense six hundred years of Turkish history in as many pages.

Even we, however, may hastily follow the im-

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mensely interesting development of Turkey's growth, from the embryonic nucleus of a nomadic tribe, to



*Portal of Green Mosque — Brusa*

its gradual attainment to the dignity and power of an independent state and kingdom. The "King's or Sultan's Front," a stretch of territory awarded to

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Ertoghrul after a second brilliant military achievement — the defence of the Pass of Ermini — was the beginning of the temporal and spiritual sway of the Ottoman Turks in Asia Minor. Within this rich land-gift lay Brusa, the enchanting city later to be made the capital of the new-comer's ever-growing kingdom.

Through the pages of historians, as upon the maps of the world, you may follow the amazing development of this new Turkish power. Each historian will colour his presentment of this story of Turkish conquest, as do the map-makers, with pigments chosen according to his taste and preference for the intense or the pallid, for the neutral-tinted, or for the more flaming-hued. Knolles will give you a mediæval illuminated recital, full of quaintly pleasing figures and phrases. From the later, more modern passionate invectives of Freeman you will doubtless turn, if only to gain a fairer estimate, to Gibbon's dispassionately pious presentment of the entrance of the race and the conqueror upon the European stage whom Europeans still regard as "the scourge of God." Finlay will be calm in his most dramatic pages, as Renan, in his incomparably poetic descriptions, will seem to have caught, not only the essential features of that sacred Syrian soil ruled over by the Turk, but the very soul of all its people.

On whatever scene or epoch your mental eye may chance to dwell, there will be one, however, to which, involuntarily, you will turn again and again. The pathos of that once-glorious city of Justinian at its

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tragic moment of defeat and capture; the moving drama that played its last great act out to its finish, in the death of Constantine, and the crowding beneath the golden walls of Santa Sophia of all Constantinople's Christian world,—where indeed, in all the more moving passages of the world's sad, yet glorious record of courage and heroism, of soaring ambition and hopeless despair, may you find another such record?

All the greater elements of tragedy are involved in the fall of Constantinople. In the eight hundred years since Justinian had gone to his rest, in the Church of the Holy Apostles, his once glorious city had sunk, year by year and century by century, to find but a shadow of its former splendour housing its paltry hundred thousand inhabitants. Yet was the prize worth all a Turk might have to lose in gaining it. Not only were its great churches still mines of gold and jewels, its women adorably fair and delicately nurtured, and the wealth of its citizens still a by-word in men's mouths, but the Turk, swollen with his great extent of captured territory in the West as in the East, felt within him the pressing, gnawing rage for the place. As statesman and warrior he knew neither his newly acquired lands in Hungary, nor along the shores of the Hellespont or the Bosphorus, were safe until the key to the sea was in his hand. Constantinople he must have or die! He felt the city to be his natural capital. To ease his desire, even as men ease a hopeless love of some fair woman by covetous looking, the Moslem strode up and down the shores of his Asian possessions, to whet his desire with glimpses

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of the fairest of cities shining so close, yet so far beyond his reach. Othman, that son of Ertoghrul who gave his name to the Turks of history, he, at least, had dreamed he touched it. This hero had had a hero's dream. From his loins there had sprung a tree whose boughs overshadowed the earth and seas. From the Nile and the Danube, the Tigris and Euphrates, ships sailed forth to cities and ports from all of whose towers and fortresses shone the golden Crescent. A great wind arose and dashed the Crescent against the crown of Constantine, that "imperial city that stood at the meeting of two seas and two continents, the centre jewel of the ring of empire." Othman was about to place this priceless ring upon his own finger when, as happens in dreams, he awoke at the most delectable, exciting moment. What Othman had failed to accomplish, even in a dream, other later Turkish Sultans had attempted to consummate. "Thunderbolt" Bayesid (Bajajet) had indeed actually besieged Constantinople, as certain of his successors harassed, and all but captured, the now temptingly enfeebled city.

It was reserved for the audacious courage of a youth — as we Westerners count a man's years, for that of a full-grown man according to Eastern reckoning — to push on where others had failed and had fallen behind.

"Let those who love me follow me!" was the characteristic shout with which Mahomet II saluted the ears of his new subjects when, on the shores of the Hellespont, he heard of his father's death. Mahomet was then twenty-one. When, two years later,

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he planned the siege of Constantinople, this extraordinary youth was one year younger than Alexander when he fought at Granicus, and three years less than Napoleon when the latter commanded at Lodi.

His plan and directions for the taking of Constantinople were projected on lines that proved the craft and cunning, as well as a breadth of military genius as completely in possession of its powers as was Napoleon, when at the zenith of his fighting capacity.

The manual labour of the building of the great fortress Rumeli-Hissar on the European shore, to complete his line of attack, was pushed on with all the ardour of youth and the tyranny of a despot. In three months the monster towers were completed. How many of the thousand workmen and the thousand masons were victims to the lash, or to overwork, no history records.

The same impetuous dash and fury attended each and every one of the more strikingly vivid appearances made by this extraordinary leader. The sky was hidden by the rain of the lances and arrows that were showered, through the clouds of smoke, from the new musketry and cannon ; for Mahomet's siege of Constantinople is memorable among all other sieges as being one in which both the old and the new war machinery were in use. Battering-rams and wooden turrets found themselves in the strange company of the new cannon, as all were pressed against the great walls. To the known horrors of war was added, therefore, the terror of a power as paralysing as it was destructive.

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The impatient, tireless figure of Mahomet was to be seen everywhere throughout the long duration of the siege of fifty-three days. We can seem to catch his gasp of despair, in the ditches at dawn, when he discovers the Tower of Romanus he had overturned the night before rebuilt in a few hours, and to hear his shout that “the word of thirty-seven thousand prophets should not have compelled him to believe that such a work in so short a time could have been accomplished by the infidels.” We follow him into the surf, impetuously riding his horse into the foaming waters up to its neck, that he may look with his own eyes and see his vast, but poorly commanded Turkish fleet let five Genoese vessels sail past it, into smooth waters, to bring their stores of provisions to succour starving Constantinople. The thunder of his maddened oaths rings still, echoing, down the aisles of the centuries.

His greatest act of military genius will enchain your interest. For to such powers as lay within the brain-cells of this Moslem youth one's wondering admiration must pay its tribute of applause. Finding the reduction of the city well-nigh hopeless, the genius of the young Sultan devised a plan as original as it was daring. Could he but get his fleet in position, upon the higher part of the harbour, then, with the co-operation of his land forces, he would have Constantinople at last within his grasp. . The fleet lay in the waters of the Bosphorus. The entrance to the harbour being inaccessible, with its great chain defended by eight vessels, twenty smaller ships, and

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numerous galleys and sloops, he must devise some other way of approach.

The scheme Mahomet projected, and that was successfully accomplished, was no less a project than to make his ships walk the hills! Since the fleet could not go by water, it might by land.

All the long night the Moslem soldiers worked. A level way was laid upon a platform, strong and broad. To ease the passing of the great ships the boards were greased with the fat of sheep and oxen, and thus "fourscore eight galleys and brigantines of fifty and thirty oars were disembarked on the Bosphorus shore, arrayed successively on rollers, and drawn forwards by the powers of men and pulleys." Ten miles were thus traversed, and in the morning the stunned, dazed inhabitants of Constantinople looked, across their battlements, to find the dreaded fleet of their enemy close beneath them.

Against the double cannonading from sea and land even the great walls of Justinian could not stand. Breaches began to be opened. The end was all but accomplished. The night before the actual taking of the city — and what a scene is that painted for us by every historian who has lavished his powers of description on that most pathetic, as it is one of the most moving, of human tragedies! To the summons of the drum, calling upon all within the city to come forth, to the last final defence of their lives and property, of their wives' and children's liberty, four thousand Romans alone responded. A few brave Greeks joined the devoted band, accompanying it to the

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palace, where Constantine Palæologus, in his moving speech, spoke not alone to this scanty remnant of the Roman people, but to the whole of his, and of our world as well ; for, as has been admirably said, “ the last speech of Palæologus was the funeral oration of the Roman Empire.”

With the cries and tears of his devoted followers still before his ears and eyes, Constantine went forth, for a last time, to receive, beneath the dome of Sancta Sophia, the sacrament of the Holy Communion.

On the dreadful morrow, after the rushing of the narrow pass of the gate of St. Romanus, the victorious Turks, on their entering Constantinople, found the city well-nigh deserted. Those who were not lying heaped in the blood-running ditches, or those who were not already stretched in death about the gates, had fled. But where ? The silent mosaiced walls of the beautiful city gave forth no answer. The wondrous towers and domes that startled, with their novel forms of beauty, the eyes alike of conquering Sultan and battle-stained soldier — neither from dome nor tower was there sign or sight of fair women’s faces or of old men’s beards.

As on and on the victorious, maddened, shouting army pressed they came at last to a mighty temple. The doors of this temple were barred. Axes did the work in a few seconds that cannon had done upon outer walls, and from the fair and splendid temple the cries of the doomed within told their Turkish captors where all Constantinople had fled. No time was then to be lost in gazing at the greatest

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miracle of beauty these Moslem eyes had as yet beheld. Beneath the gold of the wondrous walls there was other booty and a more glorious spoil. In an hour the work of appropriation of these human chattels was completed. The highest Greek nobles were chained to the lowest scourings of the city, prelates found themselves roped with porters, nuns with debauchees, maidens with grey-bearded priests, and matrons, shrieking, saw their babes tossed to find cradles in the rough arms of terrible Turks. Sixty thousand of these "domestic animals" were driven forth from this sanctuary, through the city's streets, to camp, or to fleet.

When finally the Sultan himself, attended by his pashas and guards, in his turn came up to look upon the glory of Santa Sophia, he found the vast interior all but empty. His soldiers, having possessed themselves of the more valuable human spoil, had begun to appropriate the inanimate beauty. One soldier Mahomet's quick eye detected in the desecrating act of breaking part of the marble pavement. With a blow from his scimitar his ruler reminded him that though the spoils and human captives had been promised to the soldiers as part of their booty, the public and private buildings belonged to their sovereign.

When the Moslem conqueror thus admonished his short-memoried soldier he stood on a level with him, for both Christian and Turkish historians agree in recording the fact that Mahomet dismounted from his horse before entering the sacred edifice. Therefore the fable of the outstretched palm of the conqueror upon

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the marble wall of the basilica, as is also the fiction of attributing its dark colour to its being blood-stained, is a part of the legendary equipment without which no Gothic cathedral or Moslem mosque appears to be considered complete.

The despairing cry of the last of the Roman Emperors, in the midst of his devoted nobles, each one of whom proved himself worthy of the names of Palæologus and Cantacuzene, rings with a more thrilling accent upon the ear than does Mahomet's blow from his scimitar. “ Cannot there be found a Christian to cut off my head ? ” was Constantine's anguished cry to his faithful band. The Cantacuzenes and Palæologuses knew how to die — they could not murder. Their Emperor's inspired prudence, however, won him the death he coveted. Casting away the betraying purple, he fell in the midst of his army, cut down by an unknown hand.

Thus fell Rome, casting from it the purple of its defenceless sovereignty, hiding its dignity, even as Cæsar hid his face in his mantle, as he fell at the base of Pompey's statue, that it might not suffer outrage in its death agonies.

### IV

During your stay in Constantinople not once, but again and again, will you thrill in quickened sympathy to that part of your own world that fell when this Eastern Rome fell. There will be days when you will follow, with eager interest, along the interminable stretch of walls that you may seem to come the closer

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to that vanished empire, beneath the battlemented gates and towers whose very names seem to be a part of the history of your own people. For we Anglo-Saxons are Roman as we are also Christian. No part of the amazing record of the history of Europe, since the Christian era, but is vitalised for us all with emotional interest. Rome and Constantinople have this in common ; in such ruins, monuments, and fragments as they have preserved unto the present day, the Rome of the Cæsars and the New Rome of the Constantines and Justinians are just so much more a part of our actual emotional experience.

Several of the military gates in the walls of Constantinople will furnish a new and startling tremor of interest. Their names record still that strenuous fighting of fifty-three days, when Christians manned these gates, and Moslems stormed and captured them. Far out upon the Seventh Hill of Stamboul the Gate of Jesus, Isa Kapusi, marks, by its name, the first of all the gates of Constantine's city. This, the district of the Outer Column, would have preserved for you, as late as 1507, the column itself on which stood the statue of Constantine, as well as the great gate, that portal of triumph through which conquering armies and their victorious generals first entered the city. The name of the gate was taken from the Christian church that once stood beside this fortified entrance.

Whether one follows the land-walls, the harbour-walls, or the sea-walls, each of the still standing gates repeat, by their suggestive names, some historic

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page bristling with incident, or with a tragedy, connected with the drama of this marvel of cities. Customs as homely as the landing of wood for the Imperial seraglio christened the first gate along the harbour, the Odem Kapusi, the Wood-Gate. The stately farewell of Sultans to departing admirals and their fleet was tendered in a kiosk close to the water's edge; and the nearest gate was called Yali Kiosk Kapusi, its Roman name being "The Beautiful Gate"—Porta Oraio. The Porta Peramatos was that point of land at the Horn where, in Constantine's time, as in our own day, the world that goes by water steps into the ferry-boats plying between Stamboul and Galata. The gate named after St. Theodosius, now Aya Kapu, has now nothing to fear from the rival Turkish saint who gave his name to the edifice that was changed from a Christian church into a mosque. A certain beacon light that blazed night after night and century after century, from a high promontory, baptised with its title not only the fourteenth city gate, but the more aristocratic Greeks whose chosen residences were within its district. Phanar Kapusi, in Justinian's day Porta Phanarion, was the stately portal through which restive, intriguing, ambitious Greeks passed to serve, and to betray, their Turkish rulers.

Along the sea-walls, amid the tangle of blossoming weeds, texts of scripture acclaim the date of portals that are now of a pitiful futility. Great as is still their massive strength, a barbed wire fence would present, in our days, a more obstructive line of defence than these still solid Roman battlemented portals. "Possessing

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thee, O Christ, a firm wall, King Theophilus, the pious Emperor, reared from new foundations this wall, which guard with thy might, O Sovereign Ruler, and display to the end of time, standing unshaken and unmoved," is one inscription still easily to be read.

The end of your wanderings will find you at the Seven Towers. Once an imperial castle built by Mahomet II, at one time a state prison, its historic memories make one glad to find so much of the castle a ruin, and so fine a ruin. The view from the battlements could have been but of fleeting comfort to the Sultans or Grand Viziers who, once condemned to this Turkish Bastille, knew their fate as well as the Janissaries who pitilessly decreed their doom. "The Khalif of a thousand prophecies, reserved for a juncture!" The sea seems to lisp the pathos of such destinies, as the massiveness of the towers proclaims man's cruelty to man.

A turn past the gate to the left brings one to country roads, and to strange sights to be seen growing out of grass-grown roadsides. The drive onward to regain the heart of Stamboul is of all drives save one, that to the heights above Scutari, the richest in contrasts. For miles the monster city walls and their gigantic bastions line your way. Through the now open gates, Turks riding their horses in the Saracen way,—one you will find still in fashion in Sicily, the saddle-pack placed upon the haunches, and the rider astride of these in lieu of sitting upon the middle of the animal's back,—long lines of Turks and Khurds trotting thus, with full

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sacks, into the interior, will change the clock of time for you from the present to a far-away period of antiquity. Flocks of sheep grazing amid the ruins, and shepherds whose thick cloaks and stout staves tell you they and their flocks know these walls by night as well as their faces by day — these pastoral adjuncts put one in tune for a gayer, more urban enjoyment than the ghostly company upon your left permits.

Long as the walls stretch, the great cemetery that runs parallel to them is as long. Death faces death in this weird girdle of grave-stones, cypresses, and the Roman ruins that enwall this upper portion of Stamboul. Even at the brightest hour the scene is impressive and full of a great melancholy. I know no other stretch of country where, for so many continuous miles, the lines of scriptural warning, “Dust unto dust,” is a text whose mournful pathos is conveyed with a nobler, a more impressive eloquence.

Once, as we passed between this vast death's acre and the crumbling yet monster walls, the glow of an amber sunset had transmuted into a startling radiance the brilliantly decorated tomb-stones; the night of the cypress shades was illumined with delicate rose-tints; and Justinian's walls were aerial fabrics floating in amber-tinted mists. Out from the tapering cypresses the figures of three gypsies appeared. Their arms were interlaced; the gypsy maiden in the centre was locked thus to her two tripping companions. They were making as merry

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in among the grave-stones as though each head-stone were a live young gallant awaiting their approach. Laughter shook the three gold-braided jackets, as it also filled with dancing lights the dark eyes that were brighter than their jingling seguiins. At sight of the strangers the girl in the middle of the trio, with a gay shout, wrenched herself free. She had leaped across the low grave-mounds ; she was at our carriage-wheels with a single bound of her supple, strong limbs ; and from a face as merry as it was richly hued the laughing eyes were asking would it be worth her while to show us how a gipsy could dance? The answer we gave must have failed of its true meaning, for the girl threw back her darkly ringleted head and laughed. But the dance-measure was already in her pulses. And in the dust of the road, between those aisles of death and decay, the gipsy lifted an arm and hand, and set her yellow-slipped feet to a quick twinkling. The brisk swirl was ended almost as soon as it was begun ; but this dancing gipsy, radiant in youth's light-hearted gaiety, remains as an unfading picture upon the walls of Justinian, as the spirit incarnate of life and youth and beauty sprung from amid the ruins.

### V

Within the city of Stamboul the chief architectural reminders of the older city are the Byzantine churches, the cisterns, the Burnt Column, and the monuments within the Hippodrome.

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As Constantine turned the pagan temples into Christian churches, the Turk in his turn changed the innumerable Greek Christian churches, full of gold and incense, which he found in Constantinople, into mosques. You will be taken to almost countless Byzantine churches — to St. Irene, to SS. Sergius and Bacchus, to the church of St. John the Baptist, and to the church of Saint Mary, as well as to many others, to trace out those now well-known architectural features which, in Santa Sophia were seen to leap to the full-grown proportions of the new art in building, in a few short years.

In the study of these churches, as in the marvellous arcades of the underground cisterns, the daring and novelty of this Byzantine art will furnish continuous delight. In the grace and lightness of the domes in many of the churches, as in their lofty arches and ornamental capitals, the freedom, the amazing skill, and the inventive qualities, as well as the prolific variety in conception of plan and design, will prove Justinian's period to have been that decisive moment in an art movement when, after long years of preparation and innumerable trials, art at last had found "its definite formula, and at a single stroke had obtained its apogee."

The Turk, in the later period of his occupancy of Constantinople, found in these Byzantine building modes the architectural models needed for his purpose. A whole city, filled with magnificent examples of an art whose beauties appealed to him the more since this inspiration had been due to Oriental as well as to

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Roman influences, was before him. Conquerors, however, are ever imbued with a desire to build. Mahomet, magnificent as he found the city his prowess and arms had captured, was not content with dwelling in the palaces nor in praying in the churches that were still the wonder of the world. Both palaces and churches had one ineffaceable blemish ; they were



*Fore-Court of the Bayezidiyah Mosque, or “The Pigeon Mosque”*

palaces and churches that had been built by Christians. He must prove to Europe, in whose alien territory he had won his right to reign, that Moslems also knew how to build.

Santa Sophia was the greatest of earthly temples. But it had been built for the worship of Christ. Mahomet proposed to construct a mosque that should rival this wonder. The mosque he erected may pos-

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sibly have proved a worthy rival to Justinian's masterpiece. The shaking earth in Stamboul has decreed that while the vast size and the basilican form of the Conqueror's mosque prove the imitative cleverness of its Greek architect, no part of its tiled wall surfaces, mosaics, or rich glass remains to make good the boast of Mahomet that this mosque should "surpass all others in his kingdom."

In this great mosque, however, as in the more beautiful and stately one built by Suleyman the Magnificent, there are certain features connected with each of these edifices that carry one back to the courts and fountains, to the hospitals and schools, of the once glorious older Eastern cities where charity and learning went hand in hand with religious devotion.

If in the Byzantine art the Turk found the models for his building modes, it was to Baghdad and Damascus his Moslem breadth of charity and veneration for learning turned instinctively to find plans for the group of buildings of the schools, baths, colleges, and hospitals with which he surrounded his temples. In the beautiful fore-courts with which nearly every mosque in Constantinople is adorned, you will find the Moslem has merely copied the atrium that was one of the chief features of the Byzantine churches. For models in which to enshrine his charity and his benevolence the Turk went to Persia and Arabia, to cities where millions of men and women, centuries before Christ preached the law of humanity and Mahomet's new faith decreed the fall of Arabian idols — to those Persian and Arabian cities where kings and

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queens had remembered the poor, and where the power and freedom that comes with knowledge had already been acknowledged—to such great capitals the Turk went for his college, school, and hospital plans.

In the century immediately succeeding the conquest of Constantinople a vast amount of building was done in Stamboul. New Imperial palaces, gardens, and more and more mosques were begun and finished. To embellish these all the wealth and beauty of the still standing Byzantine city was plundered. Once again, as Justinian had compelled the pagan world to yield up its treasures to beautify and adorn his Sacred Palace and Santa Sophia, so did the Sultans call upon the Christian city to contribute its rich quota to the city of the Padishah.

The Turk also, once he had crossed the Bosphorus, began to participate in the great movements that were changing the face and the lives of his neighbours in Europe.

Turkey, unlike India or China, has been, indeed, most sensibly affected, not by one, but by all the great movements that have swept over the Western world.

The tremendous upheavals in life and society during the Renaissance had their retroactive influences as far east as the mountains of Asia Minor. For it was in 1453 that Mahomet II took Constantinople; and in the next centuries we see the conquering Turks sweeping onward their Cross- and Crescent-worked standards in the north up to the very walls of Vienna,

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as in the south their conquest went as far as Baghdad, and in Egypt and Syria, from Damascus to Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers.

While Giotto, Brunelleschi, and later Michael Angelo were carving their hilly domes in stones and their towers that were to shadow Italian city streets, Persian and Arabian architects and artists were as busily building tapering minarets and chiselling palace walls and door-surfaces, upon the shores of the Bosphorus. The kiosks of Seraglio Point; the tombs, fountains, and mosques with which Stamboul is filled,—as well as the fountains and mosques to be seen and studied in Pera, Scutari, and Brusa,—each and all the Persian-Turco buildings erected in the past six hundred years, prove the taste and the ingenuity of their builders.

One of the seventeenth-century mosques in Stamboul is an admirable example of the scale of splendour on which the mother of a Sultan could plan—or could choose from among plans—a temple to her God.

To gain the fine Yeni Valideh Jami, the mosque of the Valideh Sultan—completed by the mother of Mahomet IV—at the head of the Long Bridge, you will be led past the rows of the scribes, seated as they have sat for a thousand years, at the doors of temples, pen in hand, at their little tables, transcribing the wishes or desires of their turbaned customers. Out from the whirr and stir of the Stamboul streets you will find yourself moving upward, along an inclined dirt court. This was once a passage sacred to royalty; for Sultans and the mothers of Sultans rode or were

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driven to the very door of the mosque. Once within the edifice, and you are in a fairy world with whose tints and tones you now have become familiar. The half-dozen rooms, with their richly tiled wall-surfaces, the glowing casements filled with the traceried lines



*Fountain in Great Mosque — Brusa*

of the tree of life in the jewelled Persian glass,— such sumptuous interiors the kiosks of Seraglio Point have already prepared you to expect in rooms where majesty must rest on its way to its prayers.

It is by way of the Sultan's own tribune that your profane feet may now enter the mosque. For the present Sultan, having abandoned the practice of visiting each mosque in succession once a year, permits these rooms and the tribunes, once sacred to

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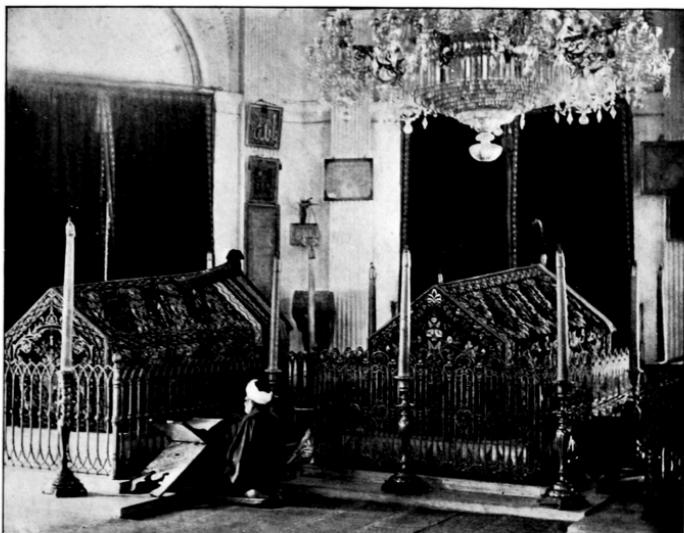
royalty, to be now opened to visitors. From no other place could the outlook upon the fair, rich wall-surfaces, the carved platforms, the gold and green frieze, and the exquisite carvings in minber and mirhâb be as comprehensive. Should the sunset lights be pouring in through the western windows, a thousand tiny lamps will shine and glow, as though lighted from within rather than from without. Perhaps next to Santa Sophia itself will this rich, golden-lighted interior of the Yeni Valideh Jami seem to you, of all mosques in this city of mosques, the one most satisfying in point of beauty.

In point of originality it is rather in his tombs and fountains, than in his grander mosques, the Turk has displayed his invention. For the origin of the curious Moslem death-chambers, and for the superior beauty of the older tiled ornamentations which were the models of the extraordinary tomb-interiors in which we see Sultans, their wives, and children lie in state, one must go to Brusa, to the old Turkish capital. Without this clue the türbehs of Stamboul present themselves as among the most singular of human monuments.

In an outer court, one which you will have entered through a garden opening directly upon the street, you will pass between two divans. On one the reclining figure of a priest, or of two priests, their beards buried in their Koran, will rise at your approach. Their smile has a sunny cheerfulness that seems borrowed from the surprising gaiety of their surroundings ; for this outer court might as well have been called a

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bower, set as it is in clustering vines, with its tiled floral devices and its sun-swept openness. Beautiful cedar doors, inlaid with ivories or seed-pearls, will be pushed open ; and you enter the tomb to find yourself in a gaily furnished drawing-room ! The octagonal



*Interior of a Türbe*

enclosure will be domed. The dome will show richly coloured decorations, if it shall have escaped the almost universal destruction by fire that has been the fate of half the tombs in Stamboul. It will be due to these desecrating flames that, in lieu of flawless tiled wall-surfaces, you will be confronted with white-washed walls. In the place of turquoise backgrounds the texts of the Koran furnishing the frieze to the walls will be of a painted green or blue ; and for the superb

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double windows, where iron is seen to take on the delicacy of lace in screen traceries, with their inlaying of niello and ivories, you will turn in amazed surprise to find the draperies of homely worsted damask curtaining the windows of the chamber, for example, wherein lies Mahomet the Conqueror.

The body of the conqueror lies alone, in the ground below the huge black sandûk that stands in the very middle of what must be considered as the strangest death-chamber human taste has as yet devised. The lower row of windows is curtained, a chandelier depends from the dome, and four huge silver candelabras stand each at one of the four corners of the coffin. Upon the black velvet pall, inscriptions of the Koran are outlined in massive raised embroideries. Across the upper head of the sarcophagus two priceless camel's-hair shawls lie, folded lengthwise. The railings surrounding the pall are seen to be of solid silver, frosted to dulled beauty by time and dust.

Were the great spirit beneath that strangely set coffin to rise, in what amazement would his warrior-spirit view his incongruous surroundings, — French curtains, with lacy inner draperies, French clocks, a crystal chandelier, a carpet, and the great candelabras ! One seems to hear the mighty roar of disdain, the shout of anger, and the laughter seasoned with consuming contempt, bursting upon the ear, filling the room as once the mighty voice seemed to fill all Constantinople, as the re-incarnated conqueror awakes to find his royal death-chamber a cosey French drawing-room.

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Had Frenchmen imagined such tombs for certain of their great dead, how entirely at home would the gay spirits of those princes of conversation have felt themselves. How Châteaubriand, or Madame de Staël, or Madame du Deffand, or even the grandeur-loving soul



*Türbeh of Mahmoud II and Abdul Aziz*

of Bossuet,— how any one of these, had they been re-summoned to this earthly sphere, in such a room would have gazed about in surprised, yet pleased recognition of certain familiar details. How quickly would the once mortuary chamber have been transformed into a salon! Divans would have recalled the seats in the *ruelle*, the curtains would have been drawn, the clock set to a merry ticking, and conversation with the eager visitors at once would have been systematically begun,

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with the texts of the Koran before them, perhaps, as its most fitting topic.

There are other türbehs less suggestive of such mundane associations. In the Mosque of the Princes the tragedy of the Circassian Khasside, wife of Suleyman I, perpetuated her grief for her sons in a beautiful marble tomb set in garden bloom. The Russian beauty, Roxalana, sleeps next to the türbeh of her great husband, Suleyman the Magnificent. In the midst of rich tiles and wondrous arabesques "the joyous one," whom Suleyman adored only less for her loveliness than for the gifts of her fine mind, keeps a sad yet beautiful state. The pathos of neglect is beginning to trail its finger of decay across the Koran inscriptions and the breaking wall-surfaces.

Of all the royal tombs in Stamboul the türbeh of Mahmoud II, "the Reformer," is the newest, as it is also the most completely Eastern in its strange assortment of the gay, and of the holy and profane. Between Corinthian pilasters seven windows, whose iron screens are richly inlaid with silver and ivory, made the chamber as bright as its garden. The boxes — sandûks — of two Sultans, of Mahmoud and of his son Abdul Aziz, are covered with gold embroidered velvets and draped with the usual costly gift shawls. At the head of Sultan Mahmoud's tomb you will discover a strange ornament to be found in a death-chamber. A high fez stands erect, upon which is pinned a diamond aigrette and plume. The fez is to symbolise the work in reform accomplished by this brave Sultan. Not to be outdone by his greater father, his son's tomb is

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decorated with the insignia of the order of Osmanieh, which Abdul Aziz founded ; and, that the room itself should furnish its quota of novelty, one of the huge chandeliers adorning the tomb-chamber, you will learn, was a gift to Abdul Aziz from England's queen, as a certain clock on the chimney (for ghosts must not perish for want of heat),— this particularly beautiful clock was presented by Napoleon III. With its carved Koran stands, with its famous illuminated Koran written in ancient Arabic by the daughter of a prophet, with its kneeling priests and the wondrous head-dresses upon the tombs, this türbeh of the two Sultans presented an interior that robbed death of its two most dreaded conditions, its sad loneliness and its unreachable remoteness. The dead Sultans, their princesses and children, seemed merely waiting, in great state and comfort, the sounds of the clarion-tongued trumpet that was to bring them back to the beautiful room that was kept in readiness to receive them.

## VI

The living Turk continues to abide in crowded Stamboul, in the midst of the Greeks, Jews, Armenians, and Khurds, as he has lived among them since, with Mahomet the conqueror, he captured Constantinople and these its people to rule over them. He has given hospitality to their gods, and within more recent years a more or less extended security to their temples and forms of beliefs. He has neither sought to proselytize, nor has he cruelly enforced his own creed on his

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neighbours who are also the co-subjects of his Padishah. “ Let there be no violence in religion ” is a rule of the Koran the Turk strictly observes. It is with his sword the faith alone is to be extended and Islam glorified.

Of all of his neighbours the Greek is the most troublesome and turbulent. The Greek can never forget he was here in Constantinople long before the hated Cross and the Crescent waved over Santa Sophia.

The spirit that pervades Stamboul, however, is the spirit of the Moslem, and not of the Greek. Throughout the hurry and stir of the packed streets it is Turkish priests and Turkish soldiers, veiled women and protected dogs, who chiefly fill them. The seal of the Moslem life and nature is upon the whole city ; and Greek may come and Jew may go, but the Turk is still in the seats of the mighty.

Upon his rags as upon his barred windows ; in the long, open shop-rows upon certain of the upper streets ; and in the market-places, where cutlers, and harness-makers, and the cobblers of the fine Turkish shoes and slippers work before the eyes of men ; at their fountains, as before their down-at-heels *cafés*, wherever there is life and movement, it is the Turk and his dignity, the Moslem and his ways and customs, who still make of Stamboul the Moslem city. In the now modernized open shops of the bazaar the figure of the Turk sits, immobile upon his rug, waiting for buyers, with the patience of those who wait in his sombre eyes, and the reticence upon lips and the restraint imposed on importuning gesture of those whose pride

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is greater than their need. His neighbour the Armenian is as a chattering magpie at your elbow, as the Jew is as the sleuth-hound upon your steps, dogging you from silk-shops to the pearl-stands, and to the quarters where the furs of strange beasts from Russia and Asia make the clamour of the Greek shopkeepers seem the voices of these re-incarnated.

The Turk eyes this babel about him with the imperturbable calm with which he has watched, during the long centuries, the many races Fate has decreed should be his neighbours upon the Seven Hills — his neighbours but never his brothers.

In the Egyptian Bazaar yonder, amid a thousand aromatic spices, and the overpowering scents of attar of roses and of musk, the European eye will find the looked-for aspects of Orientalism in bazaar-customs ; — its unaccustomed medley of products, grains, chemicals, cottons, human beings, and flocks of driven sheep and goats, or of turkeys and calves — such a mixture, in a word, as the words “ Eastern Bazaar ” conjure up. In this more Oriental shopping quarter older customs still hold their sway. “ O buyers, where are ye ? ” or, “ Long are the hours that are spent in hoping ! ” are outbursts to be heard from grave lips, as sonorously voiced, and with as scriptural a turn to the phrase, as when Solomon or David voiced their deeper needs in immortal verse.

Biblical and patriarchal scenes are also still abroad and close to the hills and vales of the city. As near to Constantinople as the hills of Thrace, a few miles away, the shepherd in his goatskin is still to be seen

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tending his flocks by night. His smoking kettle and its glowing fire are the oldest search-light of the hills. When the Grecian heroes were making the plain of Troy a poppy-field of blood, and Abraham's flocks were lapping water at Syrian pools, the Thracian peasant was then, as now, keeping his lonely watch on the bare Thracian hills, with his near flock and the distant fires of his brethren as the sole companions of the long night's watches.

## Chapter XXI

### PERA AND GALATA

**B**EWILDERING, enchanting, repelling are the streets of Pera and of Galata — across the water.

One experiences a dozen sensations or more in the flash of an eye-glance. In a minute, in such streets, one may live fast. Attraction and repulsion succeed each other, as wave follows wave. The same object, person, or spectacle, evokes this dual sensation. There is scarcely a street or a square, scarcely even a house that is found to be all of a piece.

The reasons for this duality of sensation, one which, at first, made every impression seem blurred, was obvious. In these streets of Pera, of Galata, the old and the new, the past, the present, and the possible future of the City of Constantinople as a whole,—these vital forces were to be met at every turning.

Wherever one wandered one was confronted with this battle of things seen and unseen. The shock of change was in the very air. In this city—for Pera and Galata are practically one—of strange streets, filled with oddly costumed men and women, in this city of innumerable religions, whose gods are as varied as are the temples, where the speech of men differ as widely as do their standards of morality, where, in lieu of men of one nation tightly knit, segregate in their soli-

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darity, there are nineteen nationalities, all under Moslem rule, but each and all pulling away and apart from each other,—in such a city, whose pulses beat, not in unison but in feverish discord, the inrooted, inherent vitality of old Turkish traditions is fighting a daily, hourly battle against the growing susceptibility of the Turk to change and modification. The processes of all evolution are of compelling interest. But beauty, symmetry, harmony, these are not to be looked for in the larviporous stage.

Pera and Galata, as all the world knows, were formerly suburbs of Istamboul, of old Byzantium. In the great days of Justinian, Galata was called Justinianopolis. It was then already a city, with its walls, citadel, and municipal privileges. Later, that part of the hill and shore directly opposite to Byzantium was called Pera.

The Genoese, those adventurous, clever, and militant Italians, made, in 1267, an Italian city of Galata. Although they were held in feudal tenure by the Greek Emperor of Constantinople, their city was ruled by their own Podestà. Then trouble came, as trouble will, when subjects are wilful, brave, and daring, and their overlord is overbearing and cruel. The difficulty began about a question of wall-building. In 1348 the Metropolis across the water thought Pera and Galata had walls and towers enough. The citizens and their Podestà, in Galata, held a quite different opinion. The war that followed to settle which view was strongest, ended in the Genoese erecting double walls and innumerable towers, whose central one was

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Galata tower, even now the most conspicuous object in all Galata.

Although the great walls and gates built by these mediæval Italian conquerors are gone, one or two of their ditches have given their names to certain streets. Hendek “the ditch” is one such street, and still another is Lulu Hendek. In one of the narrowest and dirtiest of all the Galata streets, in the Pershenbe Bazar,—a building with arched windows and elaborately carved Byzantine ornamentation that seems a pearl hidden in a dunghill,—this fine old building is the old Palazzo del Podestà. The finger of Italian taste and strength in palace and house building is also to be traced in many a noble structure along the Galata shore. Most of these old palaces are now become warehouses. They are as solid and harmonious in their structural beauty as when Italian nobles built them, wherein to live their vivid, strenuous, and luxurious lives.

When the Turks conquered Constantinople the Genoese reign across the water came to an end. Without his arms the mediæval Italian was stripped of his fighting spirit. Little by little the Genoese died out, to let their conquerors, the Turks, and later, in turn, all Europe, come in to make of Pera and Galata the “European City.”

Galata and Pera are still the most thoroughly alive part of Constantinople. The foreign embassies have in Pera their winter palaces. At the foot of its hill lie the quais France has built. The admiralty fills the hollow of the hill, just above the Golden Horn.

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Below Top-Khanéh, with its gun foundry, mosque, and fountain, the chain of royal palaces begins to stretch white lines of glistening splendour along the Bosphorus.

For street shows, here were some to be had for the looking. There are trains of pack-horses in all of the streets, narrow or broad ; these are laden with sand, coal, timber, salt, such merchandise as beasts of burden have carried since the time, ages ago, when men found the uses of such, and the gain to be made in transporting them. A grave company of sedan-chairs, staidly at rest below the windows of your Pera Palace hotel, is another sight worth seeing. It is not as patriarchal a spectacle as is the endless train of moving horses, but it is even more appealing, since the historic period these red-plush upholstered chairs recall is nearer to our own. Old men, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, even Europeans, and a few, a very few, aged ladies make use of these sedan-chairs for their outings. For the streets of Pera, with their crowds and ill-paved road-beds, are not kind to old bones.

The pack-horses and the sedan-chairs were thickest in a certain dusty back road that ran directly below my balcony windows. This dusty road was the chosen thoroughfare for the bullock carts coming up from the shores of the Golden Horn ; for wandering flocks of sheep who browsed, unwitting it was their last earthly meal, on the scanty grass of Le Petit Champ des Morts, on their way from their hill pastures to the butchers' stalls of Stamboul ; for gay, debonair groups of gipsies, wearing the superb old Turkish costume,

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richly braided in gold and silver, and whose vests, trousers, belt-scarfs, and chemisettes made moving patches of crimsons, greens, pinks, and purples in and out of the trees ; for Greek women, also, in their full Greek costume, whose trousers and vest are all in one garment ; and for hundreds and hundreds of veiled women, their *feridjehs* intensely brilliant against the blacks of the slanting cypresses,— the road, for all of these, was the road of predilection, as well as for pashas on horseback, with their mounted escort and runners, and for swift, flying shapes of magnificently clad Anatolian soldiers from the palace, taking this country short cut to Stamboul.

For those who delight in sharp contrasts, no city in the world can yield such a wealth of amazing opposition as does this part of Constantinople known as “the European quarter.”

You may go direct from prisons to palaces, from Cafés Chantants to the chanting of the Koran in Moslem mosques. You may gaze on the whirling of the white skirts of the dancing Dervishes in the afternoon, and continue to watch snowy petticoats, beneath Doucet gowns, swirling in the waltzes of an embassy ball in the evening, to end your review of the dance movement later on— quite early in the morning—in looking upon the slower, more mysterious, sensuous evolutions of gauze draperies in the *danse du ventre*, executed by Persian *danseuses* in the questionably respectable quarters of lower Galata Town.

The projects— financial, commercial, or industrial — planned in Chicago, New York, Vienna, Buda

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Pesth, London, Paris, or Berlin, traverse continents to come to their finish, successful or otherwise, in the tall banking houses, in the stately embassies, in the more mysterious houses of Pashas,—all of which line the narrow, dirty Galata and Pera streets.

Pera itself is turning speculator, builder, and improver. The famous Petit Champ des Morts, the burying-ground running from the top of Pera Hill westward and downward to the Golden Horn,—this cemetery, for centuries the favourite out-of-door playground for resting, thinking, idling Turks, this place of burial and public parkland in one, has been found too profitable to be given over to the bones of dead men and to the reveries of living ones. Its outlook upon the Golden Horn and the mosques of Stamboul is the sort of outlook that brings gold into the pockets of the shrewd and of the unscrupulous. European apartment houses rise up where formerly a turbaned headstone told the passer-by the rank and state of the deceased. One of these houses was in process of building. I watched it as it grew, day after day. The structure was planned on the familiar lines of such buildings seen everywhere, in Paris, in Vienna, in Denver. That was the sign of Europe, of America, entering into possession upon Turkish streets. Now note the point where the East comes in, and holds its own, in the very teeth of iron girders, of plate-glass windows, and of Mansard roofs.

The bricks, the mortar, the iron, the very planks for this fine, modern mansion will be brought to its door, hour after hour, day after day, as bricks and

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mortar have been brought, in the Asian way, for innumerable centuries. Long, interminable strings of pack-horses, of asses, come up from the shores where the ships lie with their cargoes,—up through the silent cypress groves to the hill where the house is being builded according to Mansard and to modern requirements. Khurdish or Persian bricklayers unload the deep baskets. Armenian masons and carpenters sort the bricks, the long planks of timber, and the machine-cut ornamentation.

As for the choice of the site of this building, and of all the others beginning to crowd the hill-top, there could be but one verdict,—it was the very best in all Pera; one of the best and most beautiful in the whole round world.

The outlook across the Golden Horn to Stamboul, from any part of this dusty road, was one in ten thousand. Every mosque and minaret, crowning the seven hills of the famous city, stood out as clear as though their wondrous outlines were etched against a more solid substance than fluid ether. At whatever hour of the day you shot your glance westward, it was to discover a new city, one lighted with new tints, one hung in different substances against the vast scroll of sky. Stamboul might be a grey, pale city, rising out of the steely Golden Horn in the morning; at noon it might be quiveringly alive with colour, every mosque a dome of silver, each minaret a flashing column of light; at sunset the city would, perchance, turn to amethyst, its houses purple patches, its temples monster garnets, against a blood-red sky. And when the night fell, it

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was to see a vast blackness studded with thousands and thousands of lights below the vaster star-lit night, one firmament arched above a lesser.

The pictures hung along this dusty highway were indeed among those best worth seeing.

Parallel with this country road ran the Pera high street. Europe sat in firmer seat upon this thoroughfare. Yet here also the East pressed close against the modern shapes, the modern ways, and the modern innovations. Take the very first of all the many strange, sharp contrasts that presents itself as you stroll towards La Grande Rue. At the corner, a Turk in a fez and an overcoat will be heard blowing a thin blast through a small brass horn. A jingling noise, that of innumerable small bells, will follow the thin tooting. The bells hung about the necks of horses lightly harnessed to a narrow horsecar filled with fez-capped passengers, are not trusted, however, to convey their warning message. The horning is the primitive Eastern way of announcing to street traffic that a tramcar is about to turn a corner.

Still another set of bells will presently send forth a more silvery jangle. These will be hung in parallel lines inside an immense loop spanning the backs of two noble bullocks. This is the more antique Eastern method of warning foot-passengers to make way for a cart carrying stones as large as a house.

The bullock driver, a half-naked Arab, who moves along with the supple pride of his race, will presently be seen slanting his untamed barbarian's eyes on two votaries of Venus. The locks of these frail dames, it

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will be noted, are of the same hyacinthine hue as were those of their dead-and-gone sisters, on whose dyed



*Laleli Djami — Als Serai Quarter*

tresses the fond eyes of Greek and Roman nobles were fixed, centuries ago, in the gold and mosaiced streets of Byzantium.

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Nearer, quite close at hand, across the street, a mass of daintily held white and pink petticoats will presently sweep into view. Beneath the disc of a creamy sunshade a fair fresh face, topping a slender shape that knows how to move beautifully on two tiny high-heeled shoes, will be lifted to the bright sunshine. The pink petticoats will all but sweep the legs of an ass on whose patient sides, nailed to two slanting boards, hang the crimson liver and entrails of dead cats.

Such contrasts line every street and alley of Pera and Galata, as from the Galata shores to Pera heights one fine building succeeds another. Noble stone façades rear their state above filthy gutters, above reeking streets, above rickety shanties and hovels we should consider a disgrace to the slums of any modern city.

The British Embassy stands in the midst of its great gardens, at the very top of Pera Hill. In its stone solidity it is as majestic as a fortress palace, set in a green wood. Ten steps away from its wrought-iron gates the foot must look well to the slimy streams oozing from adjacent alleyways. Just behind the embassy are the Pera fish and fruit markets; you enter the open streets to find yourself in the far, far East, with its smells, with its sickening odours of raw, freshly cut meats, with its entrails of fish gaudily swung before your eyes, with ripe fruit surcharging the great baskets, and over-ripe fruit, a pulpy mass on the ground, where mangy dogs, and diseased-looking cats, and half-naked ragamuffins, are tumbling over each other for possession of the fallen, putrid mess.

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Go where you will, throughout the length and breadth of Constantinople, nostrils and eyes are sickened one instant, to be delighted, entranced, rejoiced with beauty, colour, and splendour, at the very next turning.

Along La Grande Rue, the shops, the fashions, the book-stalls, and the foreign newspaper stands, meanwhile, are doing a quicker, surer work of denationalisation, regeneration, and modernisation than colleges or mission schools.

The Turkish ladies who come to shop in La Grande Rue, to buy innumerable articles at “Le Bon Marche,” are working a silent, unconscious, but none the less amazing revolution in Turkish life. Fashion is the greatest of all subverters. Since Abdul Aziz brought from France French notions about women’s dress, and introduced to the women of his harem the intricacies and refinements of Parisian costumes, the tastes and desires of Turkish women, quite insensibly, have begun, in their turn, their retroactive influence upon Turkish life and finance. The passion for splendid raiment is an instinct with the Oriental. With men as well as women the adornment of the person has been, for long ages, a cult, a social rite. Along with the influences wrought upon sensuous, semi-barbaric natures by an Eastern sun and the intense Eastern light, under which the strongest colours pale and fade, the Turks, in common with all Eastern peoples have long associated magnificence in apparel with high rank. Gorgeous as were the jewel-studded, lavishly embroidered Turkish costumes worn by the richer classes in former

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days, they had this one inestimable advantage, -- they were always in the highest fashion. It took a new reign to bring in a new cut of a pasha's mantle or gem-studded turban. As for the women, the harem of the Mahometan had its own peculiar economies; for within its mysterious walls it was the women who were changed, or put aside, and not their dress.

The busy brains of the men-milliners in the Rue de la Paix have effected a bloodless revolution. The Moslem rule of centuries, in matter of dress, is at an end. "*Nous avons changé tout cela,*" the Frenchmen must cry gaily, in a chorus, as they finger the checks signed by strange, undecipherable, but very negotiable, Turkish signatures. Boxes upon boxes of gowns, ball dresses, dinner dresses, tea gowns, shoes, slippers, the finest hosiery, the costliest lace-trimmed underwear — these are sent via the Orient express or steamers from Marseilles, to be deposited at the harem doors of wealthy Turkish signiors. With the coming of these boxes, the wealthy Turkish signior has awakened to an unpleasant discovery. It is now the dresses which change every year, and not, alas! his odalisques! The Bey or Pasha who twenty years ago could have had two hundred women in his harem, and still know himself to be a rich man, now feels himself poor with but a single wife and her daughters to clothe, and a mere handful of Jarigas, but these, of course, don't count, for slaves still wear — Allah be thanked! — the comparatively costless Turkish dress.

For the Turk who continues to indulge in the wan-

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ton, yet legitimate, extravagance of four wives, and a properly stocked harem, ruin soon begins to peep in at him through the lattices of his closely guarded salamlik. Four wives, not to mention their and his daughters, and the ladies who compose the properly stocked harem,—every one of these must dress according to the financially regulated changes of Parisian modes. With such a household who can wonder at the charges of corruption, of extortion, of dishonest pilfering of all sorts, levelled at the higher Turkish officials? Paquin, Doucet, Worth — these are the men who have made it well-nigh impossible for a Mahometan courtier or official to be either entirely honest, or, matrimonially, a properly many-wived man!

If you wish to learn the secret of the changes that are going on in Turkish life, the forces that are at work among the women of Turkey will furnish you with perhaps its truest solution.

In the streets, as you pass these ladies, you would not, you could not, suspect the full nature of their complete transformation in this matter of costume. It is still good form even among the smartest Turkish ladies to wear, when abroad, their *feridjeh*. But the cloak which is gown and inverted cape in one, the upper part of the garment being drawn over head and ears, this primitive domino cloak, still universally worn by the less wealthy classes, whether walking or in their carriage, has undergone a very sensible amelioration. Instead of the disfiguring drawing-string pattern, the smart *feridjeh* is now simply a very well cut, long silk

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cloak, rather loose fitting, but still all-enveloping. The ladies whom you pass in their well-turned-out coupés, with only the black man's face beside the liveried coachman on the box to remind you it is not a strictly European establishment, these ladies have commonly chosen dark sombre shades of silk for their silken cloaks. Their veils are no longer the older fashioned *yaskmak*, that famous veil that hid all the features save that which is at once most betraying and most seductive in a woman's face, her eyes,—this bewitching mask is now chiefly relegated to the poorer classes and to negro slaves. The fashionable Turkish veil of our own time is a true veil. A large square of lace, black or white, covers completely both head and face. The thickly woven mesh falls below the chin. In such a disguise as that provided by the silken cloak and the veil-wrapper, who could divine the dainty French bodice, with its web-like embroideries, and lace incrustations, or the tight hip-skirt, with its flying base, or the ropes of pearls, or the costly uncut emerald or diamond necklace?

For a shopping tour, the wife of the wealthiest Pasha dons the skirt and shirt (the blouse) that has become as universally the accepted utilitarian feminine costume as has the republican sack-coat and trousers for men, whether sovereign or clerk. This skirt and shirt is worn beneath the cloak.

In the European shops of Pera, if you use your eyes and ears, certain other changes and modifications, at work upon the loom of Turkish life, will confront you. The young daughters of matronly ladies whose half-

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open *feridjehs* betray them as wearing smart Parisian gowns and high-heeled shoes, dames who doubtless began their harem life in gauze chemisettes and sagging Turkish trousers,—the daughters of these ladies you may hear stammering a few words of French or English. If none but women happen to be within the shop, the girls' fair fresh faces will be, and will remain, unveiled. It is only after marriage the face of a Mahometan woman must be unseen save by one man, her husband, and by the eyes of her own household.

One such unveiled Turkish young girl I watched, for a half-hour or more. She was obviously of high rank. The features were large; they were superbly moulded, the nose drooped with that peculiar curve so distinctly Turkish, a droop which is neither Roman, nor is it Jewish, yet it is one which gives a peculiar distinction to the Turkish face. The mouth was full, luxurious; and the lips were the colour of a damask rose closing over snow. Beautiful as was the face, in its sensuous, youthful fullness, it was the eyes, the wonderful, lustrous, fathomless Eastern eyes, that held your own and would not let them wander. As in the eyes of a maiden one sees the beginning of the woman-life dawning, in this girl's superb great eyes I read the breaking lights of a new, half-troubled existence. The girl was translating for her mother some Turkish phrases she was turning into French. The effort to find her words in the difficult foreign tongue had brought a vivid, flashing light into her face. She was learning the newest of all lessons for a Turkish maiden,—she was learning to think in a foreign language.

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This, the education of its women, is another among the many innovations that is being introduced among the more highly born or highly placed Turks. It is the mothers of a race who alone can educate, can transform its sons and daughters into the higher types of men and women.

Meanwhile, among the Turkish men, as every one knows, the transformation of the exclusive Oriental into the accomplished European is already become the universal pattern of a Turkish gentleman. Whatever his party, whether he belong to the old or the young Turkey party, the Turk of any pretension to style, or to social state, clothes himself in certain of the European modes of thought, as he does, sartorially, in European dress. Wherever you may chance to meet a well-born or highly educated Turk, whether in the salons of Paris, or those of Rome, St. Petersburg, Vienna, or nearer to their home, in the palace of the Sultan, you will be struck with his completeness, both as a man of the world, and of the great world, and also with his finish. Whatever the laws may be governing the standard of manners in Turkish life, their results prove them to be beyond criticism. The Turk has not only perfect manners, but he also has this peculiarity among other Eastern nations: however lowly his birth, once he has "arrived" he is transformed into an aristocrat of deeply inrooted conservative tendencies, who yet presents, outwardly, a most engaging, sympathetic plasticity. Those whose lineage has ancestral distinction reveal a most engaging social equipment. "Whenever I want to talk to

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a man who understands *everything*, I turn to B——Bey," said a beautiful woman recently to me in Rome. "He is as clever as a Frenchman, as versatile as our American men, and he has the sympathetic quality of a woman."

The wealthy Pasha who drives, in his English brougham or Vienna-marked victoria, from the Stam-boul heights to pay his visit to his sovereign, in clothes that are made in Paris or London, holds in his hand *Le Temps* or the *London Times*. His fez alone remains as the survival of his former elaborate Turkish costume. His country cousin, richer, perhaps, by many thousands than his town-bred relative, passes him riding high upon his Khurdish saddle. A flash of gold braiding on inner and outer garments, a blaze of colour about neck and belt, high boots, and the gemmed fingers, such are the still lingering traces of Turkish dress among country gentlemen. This rustic Pasha, Ali—governor—perhaps of some near province, is still followed by one or more mounted servants, by his pipe-bearer, and a runner streaming with sweat. But the country cousin will oftener be found trotting along the country road than along La Grande Rue.

## Chapter XXII

### SCUTARI AND BRUSA

#### I

**I**F in Pera and Galata one finds Europe and European customs pressing hard upon Turkish centres of life, in crossing the water one may pass into a city where the East still holds forty-five thousand souls true to their Oriental habits and ways of living.

As seen from across the Bosphorus, Scutari appears to hang upon its hillside like a jewel awaiting the touch of the sun to wrench from it its secret of colour. Among the many spectacular effects presented in the ensemble of Constantinople's marvellous *décor*, Scutari's changeful colour contrasts, next after those of Stamboul, contribute the most effective element of beauty. Its old Turkish palaces and villas ; its great gardens and terraces ; its blanching mosques and their aerial minarets ; the grey and pink toned houses rising with the hillslope, — each and all of these features are fused into an incomparably harmonious ensemble.

To enter Scutari, however, is to have this veil of illusion rent in twain. The brusque surprise of disenchantment confronts one at the first step upon the Asian shore. The rose-hued, fairy world you have spent

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hours in watching from across the water, this fairy world is seen to be a city in decay. About the fountain, close to the wharf, the roads and the dilapidated hacks, the bullock carts sunk in the mire, the mangy dogs ravenous as wolves, and the toppling houses,



*Cemetery in Scutari*

this is the Scutari you have exchanged for the delicate and exquisite city, sensitive as a richly toned landscape to colour and cloud effects.

As one presses farther onward into the heart of the town the spirit of an immense indifference, of a profound despair, seems to pervade this the once “golden city.” On your way upward to the Tekkeh of the Rufâî, to the hall and monastery of the Howling Dervishes, streets and houses will continue to impress upon you this their character of forlorn miser-

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ableness. That buildings as rootless as the wooden structures that line your way can withstand the winter's boisterous storms ; that human beings who have working hands and fingers can willingly abide in streets where offal and other unnamable horrors are left to work with the sun the pestilential vapours that clog the air — these wonderings that fill your mind receive no answering solution from the shabbily costumed men and women who flit like shades, silent and indifferent, beneath the crumbling house-fronts.

Behind this Oriental apathy lies a subtler, deeper race-instinct. This city of decay seems perhaps as good a city as any other to these its citizens. For as you yourself wake to the fact that in entering Scutari you have passed the great boundary — that Europe is left behind,—centuries behind,—you wake also to the realising sense that this city that is the beginning of a continent is the presentment of life as it has been lived, in the Asian way, for countless generations. The Orient is before you, with its squalor, its filth, its coarser indifference to mere things of sense, its subtler insight into the deeper, the more hidden realities of being. The Oriental has still the blood of the nomad in his veins. His cities are one or more encampments. His houses are his tent. And even as out upon the desert the refuse of house and table, thrown to the winds or cast upon the sandy plain, was the usage of those who "fold their tents and silently steal away," even so, in these their narrower thoroughfares, sights and smells that sicken your nicer sense, the Asiatic, whose senses are not nice, sees and breathes as freely,

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in his tainted air, as you in your drained, plumbed, and sewer-made modern capitals.

Where a certain street dipped to take a plunge downward we left our carriages to enter the famous Tekkeh. A weedy garden led to an open door. Beyond, a rectangular hall was seen to be thickly peopled. Once again we were late for this, the spectacle of grown men working their way Godwards through strange rhapsodic trances.

The Mosque of the Rufâî was small ; above the mihrâb hung a number of weapons whose sharp edges and sharper points told you clearly enough their purpose. The dervishes, who were already in the earlier stages of their ecstasy, are not, however, permitted to indulge in the fiercer delights of those self-inflicted wounds and blows, by means of which both Christian monks and Moslem dervishes have believed they could liberate the spirit the more freely from its hateful carnal tabernacle.

The Sheikh was already in his place before the mihrâb. The line of dervishes faced him. In white, blouse-like garments, caught about the middle by a leathern belt, lean, athletic dervishes ; stout dervishes of full habit and quiet pulses ; negroes, one a giant, rapt of eye, wild of gesture, already passion-strung, — these one and all were bending, twisting, bowing, now backwards, now forwards, as the shouts, “ La ilâh illa ’llah,” were shrieked upon the air. The chorus grew wilder and wilder, and the rocking motion became more and more frenzied. The gigantic negro was already lost to sense of place or surrounding ; his hoarse cry of “ il ”

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and “lah” was a gasp ; the massive frame was passion-locked ; beneath the half-closed lids the whites alone of the wild eyes were visible ; the ecstatic possession was at last beginning indeed to work its frenzy. A little white foam was forming a circlet of bright moisture upon the dulled scarlet of the thick lips.

The other figures along the line were only less vehement, less rapt than was this huge African. The faces of the thinner-faced monks had begun to pale and pale. The blue veins in their transparent temples were turning to violet, there were streaks of scarlet staining the pallor of cheeks and brows, as, rocking, bowing, twisting, the bodies of these callers upon their god ninety-nine times, were hurled into space to give to each shout its accompanying spasmodic, but all the while, systematically directed bow. For the syllables of their profession of faith are divided into six ; and as at the first “la” they bend forward, at the next “i” they stand erect, so also at the succeeding “lâh” do the brethren bend to the left, to swing again into the first position. And thus on and on, faster and faster, and wilder and wilder, swirled the monks, as louder and louder rose their cries. The movement of these wild figures seemed to have passed to their last final limit of savage abandonment. But not yet — there was still a fiercer, a more barbaric degree to be attained. Two singers who had been seated upon a prayer-rug had risen. They had begun to pass cymbals and drums to the brethren. Without stopping their mad motion, in the hands of each wild figure the instruments were soon clashing upon the air in weird, discordant clangour.



*Gipsy Sorceresses*



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For a brief space the hideous noise of the shouting voices, the metallic cling of the brass cymbals, and the dull roar of the beaten drums seemed to ease the tempest of fury roused in these swaying figures. Then, in an instant, as a wave is seen to curl and curve inward with swift and silent power before it rises to sweep with inrushing leap upon the shore and there to break in maddened swirl, did the momentarily stilled frenzy of these wild men gather in strength to loose the demon of passion within. The sheikh had stamped his foot, and in lieu of the holy man he was supposed to be he might have been the son of Lucifer himself, calling on his demon hordes to let their fiendish souls have play, for the circle of shouting, swirling figures, holding each other now loosely by the hand, as they pranced, tossed, and hurled their bodies about, shouting “Hû ! yu hû !” (“He! O he!” [is God]), were rather a band of maddened fiends, worked to frenzied intensity, than the mortals we know as men.

One round of this mad dance was enough. As we passed into the fresh, cool air the sensation of having come back to a normal, sane world, freed from the cries and prancings of demoniacal fanatics, was a reality even the dirt and filth of Scutari’s streets could not dispel.

The cool of the air swept keener and purer, as we mounted the heights above the city to gain the famous view from the peak of Bulgurlû.

Seen from the mountain top, Scutari resumed its wonted decorative aspect. It lay below, far below, like a diadem set above the blue eyes of the sea.

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Vast was the world that rolled itself beneath the mountain brow. The billowy earth swept far inland, its undulations ending only with the vaporous wall of sky. Stamboul, Pera, the shores of the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora,—eastward, westward, north or south, the great prospect spread itself out with an almost conscious pride in its wondrous beauty.

To complete its charm, some Turkish ladies and their suite were abroad upon the summit. They had brought the grace of their languid poses, the soft brilliance of their silken cloaks, and their well-bred laughter to give movement and colour to the scene. Before our advent they had been sitting, in correct picnic posture, about the edges of a Turkey carpet. The remnants of their little banquet lay about, in fragments, upon the grass. The group had already scattered, to wander at will about the mountain-top ; an Anatolian servant, in brilliant blues and silver embroideries was in the act of shaking the carpet, as we neared him. Perched like a bird upon a branch, three of the ladies were already seated, huddled close upon the rim of the mountain cliff that overlooked the Bosphorus.

It was toward a certain figure,—one that stood out with the vivid intensity of a Francesco portrait against the background of pale azure,—that my eyes were drawn and held. The figure was that of a young, an unveiled maiden. She had taken her seat upon a rock. She was watching, with a musing light in her eyes, a flock of turkeys that, unaffrighted, had circled

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about her, to snap at the crumbs she was lazily tossing them. Into the girl's face, with its dark, vivid, maidenly glow and beauty, something of the spirit of



*Mosque and Türbe in Brusa*

the vast prospect below seemed to have passed — something of its generous breadth and its sweep of power, as the note also of its lustrous colouring seemed focussed in the jewelled necklace that lay upon the

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amber throat, as the emerald waters beneath girded the topaz sands of the shore.

### II

Into this world of mountain silence and peace we were swept, on the following day. For our time had come. We were to pass beyond the conflicting presentations of the life and ways of men, in these cities of Constantinople, to the serene peace and calm of the ancient Turkish capital. Brusa, as it lay upon the lap of Mount Olympus, was to reveal to us further secrets of the sources of Turkish strength and power.

As we boarded our steamer both the shores and the decks of our boat presented, as if in conspiracy, a series of pictures richly illustrative of Turkish life and character. Once again the long lines of victorias and broughams crossing the Long Bridge, with their veiled occupants and ministers in court uniforms, announced the ceremony of the Selamlik was soon to begin. Once again the embassy Kāvass was in a whirl of executive excitement, that no mischance should mar the journey of His Excellency into the interior. And still in our ears, for a few days to come, was the familiar click of the aide-de-camp's sword to beat its metallic music on rough pavements, on boats' decks, and upon polished mosque floors.

The idle crowd gathered upon the quays seemed, in its casual, improvised way, to embody the Turk's sway of empire over many races of men, for no two were of one colour; and the upper quarter-deck, at the mid-day hour, was to proclaim to us anew the sincerity of

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the Turk's piety, for gathered there, in a place no larger than a prayer-rug, were Mussulmans upon their knees, praying Mecca-wards.

Once out upon the vast blues, and the world of Constantinople's greatest beauties stood before us, as if awaiting the last tribute of our worshipful admira-



*Brusa*

tion. Seraglio Point showed its jewelled kiosks above the yellow Roman walls, and Santa Sophia lifted its majesty to dwarf the rival heights of the Moslem mosques; Scutari glowed and blanched, sensitive to the last; and the grim horrors of the Seven Towers were forgotten in the glory of their sunlit, ruined mass.

A little while, and there was only the sea world about. Then the distant blues of tall, shapely mountains grew to green verdure and the shining of houses within tree-clumps. The beaches of Mudania were

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starred with colour, such colour as made the Pera and Stamboul hues and tones seem tawdry as tinsel, for in the wide open spaces of this brilliant sea and mountain world, every tint was intensified to a great glory of brightness.

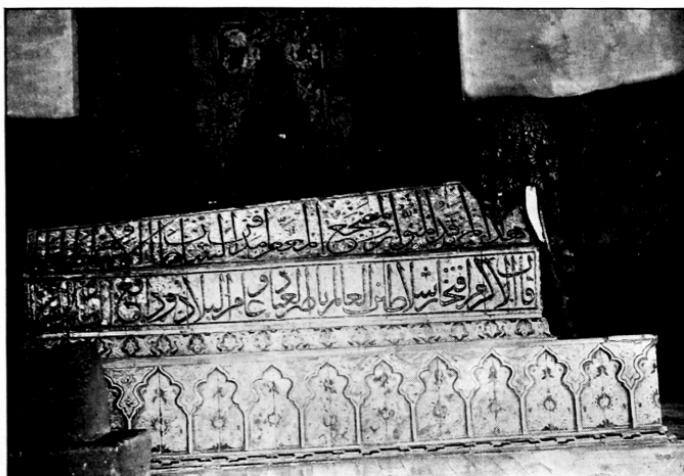
As we rose with the steep hills, to pass into the silence of vineyards and of billowy undulations, this fresh bloom of an unstained brightness was upon all things; it was upon the soft, velvety browns of the great mountain steeps, as it was upon the startling yellows and blues of two veiled shapes, emerging from between some hilly uprisings like brilliantly clad apparitions from an upper sphere; and the brightness also touched to silver the tender greens of olive groves, as it darkened to rich crimsons the red coats of the moving cattle.

So very remote was this world among the hills from all stir of sound that a shepherd, calling to his flock in the valley below, could be heard flicking the stones about him, with his stick. The tinkle of the sheep's bells made the sole music of this vast, still mountain height.

Even as Constantinople, at the beginning of our journey, had appeared to group before us her more beautiful features, so was Brusa, at first only a long grey mass perched upon mighty Olympus, seen gradually to present the marvels of her loveliness in one complete, comprehensive sweep. One by one the wonder-city yielded up her treasures. The domed baths to whose famous waters Theodora had come, with her royal suite of four thousand attendants; the

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famous mosques within whose sea-green walls we were to find the soul of Oriental colour ; the turquoise tombs beneath whose jewelled splendour Sultans seemed to lie, dreaming of their earthly conquests ; and the great gardens, where centuries ago, artists, poets, dreamers, philosophers and emperors had anticipated the Medi-



*Tomb of Mahomet I—The Turquoise Tomb*

cean better-known reunions,—baths and mosques and gardens lay dreaming upon the knees of Olympus. For the sun was tinting the brows of the city with drowsy twilight hues.

From above the city streets, as we drove into them, the chorus of a melodious and rich-voiced chant fell upon the ear. Far out across the valley, and up into the mountain depths, the chorus, in flute-like notes, rang out. The wavings of countless silver plumes, the leaves of the poplars peopling the slopes, seemed

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the only audible response. But the chorus was heard throughout all Brusa. For it was the call to prayer, sung out to the great air-spaces from the high-hung parapets of minarets. You may hear it calling now three times a day, across the breadth of great continents. And the souls of the "faithful," like the waving plumes of the poplars in Brusa, will bow as the call rises into the sky-spaces.

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS



## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS

### I

#### TWO OLD TRAVELLERS

**I**T is good, once in a way, to go back instead of hurrying forward ; to see an older, grander world through the more naïve eyes of those who were avowedly enthusiasts, and yet were unashamed, who went into foreign countries neither to criticise nor to reform them, but merely to enjoy “the strange sights of strange men.”

The curtain screening the more intimate life and manners of the Turk was first lifted by the white hand of an English ambassadress.

When, in 1717, the brilliant, vivacious Lady Mary Wortley Montagu went to Constantinople to fall in love with everything Turkish, she sent home the pictures of her infatuation painted as she and her sister in letters, Madame de Sévigné, almost alone among women have known how to portray people and places.

In the warmth of Lady Mary’s ardour she painted the East as the most perfect of countries. The climate, she vowed, was “delightful in the extremest degree.” Turkey was the country where she found “women the freest, men the most faithful, religion the purest, and manners the most polite.” If its Beys, Pashas, and

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Effendis betrayed tendencies to an “amiable atheism,” it was only that they might prove themselves the better wits.

This clever Englishwoman, to whom no subject was dull, was also “charmed with many points of the Turkish law, to our shame be it spoken, better designed and better executed than ours.” Morality, indeed, in that “heathenish” country she found was at so surprisingly high a level there was even a punishment for convicted liars. The very worst thing Lady Mary could find to say of the Turks of her day, indeed, was that “they were too proud to talk to merchants,” merchants being, practically, the only travellers in that century of the early Georges.

For over a century and a half Lady Mary’s sprightly pictures of the life of Turkish women have remained as the true Western ideals of the mysterious East. No subsequent visits of even the brightest and wittiest of European women to a Turkish harem have ever succeeded in effacing her visit to the lovely Sultana Fatima. Her account of that “adorable creature’s beauty, of her sweetness full of majesty that no court breeding could ever give, that surprising harmony of feature, that charming result of the whole! That exact proportion of body! . . . the unutterable enchantment of her smile!” — this is the portrait of the perfect being who swims toward us in her “waistcoat of green and silver, in her caftan of gold brocade, with her lovely arms adorned with jewelled bracelets, and her broad girdle set round with diamonds.” This is the vision of enchantment every Western mind prefig-

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ures as the beauteous Sultana, who will surely greet our eyes once we are lucky enough to find ourselves within a Turkish harem.

The people of Lady Mary's century were not as virtuous as we know ourselves to be. The ambassadress of England could receive a commission to "buy a Greek slave," and could attempt to execute the order without going through an attack of the moral shivers. She could also bring back to England one of the greatest boons to plague-stricken Europe ever brought out of either the East or the West, and yet loudly bemoan having undertaken the thankless task.

The Eastern system of inoculation for smallpox, as practised in Constantinople, furnished the witty narrator with one of the most amusing of all the scenes described in the letters :

"People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox ; they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met, commonly fifteen or sixteen together, the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sort of smallpoxes and asks what vein you please to have opened. Every year thousands undergo this operation ; and the French Ambassador says pleasantly that 'They take the smallpox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries.' "

Lady Mary's courageous attempt to introduce this "taking of the smallpox" into England was met with the usual persecution that is meted out to all innovators. Her confession of regret at having turned benefactress is refreshingly human. The time of the

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self-complacent lady philanthropist had not yet come. Lady Mary's avowal that "she would never have attempted it had she foreseen the vexation, the persecution, and even the obloquy it brought upon her," is an outburst sounding strange indeed to modern ears!

Lady Mary's resumé of the life of the Turks of her time is immensely valuable as contrasted with the changes in that life now to be noted by every foreigner. A hundred and eighty years ago, life, apparently, was worth the living in Turkey. "'T is true their magnificence is of a very different taste from ours, and perhaps of a better. I am almost of opinion they have a right notion of life. They consume it in music, gardens, wine, and delicate eating, while we are consuming our brains with some scheme of politics or studying some science to which we cannot attain. Considering what short-lived, weak animals men are, is any study so beneficial as present pleasure?"

Sixty years later a contemplative Dutchman, a student of men and people and yet a soldier, man of action and diplomat, Baron Gelder, gives us an equally rosy view of life in the Constantinople of his time.

The diplomatic society Baron Gelder found assembled in Pera and on the banks of the Bosphorus recalls the *fine fleur* of the best Parisian salons of the ideal century in which he had the good fortune to be born. It was the century when conversation was accounted an art, and not, as in our day, the sure sign of one mistakingly in love with a dead fashion; when to be witty was accounted better than being

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virtuous ; when men talked of love as a serious calling, and women held it a disgrace to be single, promptly immuring their disgrace in a convent ; when diplomatists were courtiers, and a lady of quality could indulge in an adventure, and no one, not even her own son, throw up horrified hands in amazement.

The foreign and diplomatic circles at Pera, at Therapia, and at Buyukdера, led lives that were as gay as they were diversified. On Sundays, at the height of the season, the beautiful valley of Buyukdера, with its wonderful plantain trees, was as crowded with the fashionable world as is the Longchamps or the Pall Mall of our own day. The embassy houses were miniature palaces ; their terraces and gardens combined Oriental luxuriousness with Christian neatness. Balls and parties succeeded each other with the rapidity and kaleidoscopic change repeated in the political world of the latter end of the eighteenth century. France was then on the eve of its Revolution. Venice was still a maritime power ; Poland was singing its swan song ; Russia had already begun to push her bear's claws out upon Turkish soil, and Turkey herself was scarcely as yet conscious that her sun of glory was dipping perilously toward her twilight days. For in those days the events that agitated Europe often found in Constantinople the centre of their dramatic setting.

Baron Gelder congratulates himself on his youth having been passed in this "great world" of the queen of Eastern cities. The Constantinople of his day was the "great world" we must go to a half-dozen

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capitals to find in ours. Monsieur de Choiseul, the French Ambassador, had brought with him the insolence and flippant gaiety of the court of Versailles. Sir Robert Ainslee, the English Ambassador, had turned his palace into an asylum for artists and men of letters, with the finest collection of antique medals in the world to amuse and interest them. The Venetian Ambassador had brought a more interesting living curiosity — a wife who was a model of virtue *quoique belle et ornée de talents*. The other ministers and ambassadors had wives who, fortunately for the amusement of their circle, were less conspicuously original. The diplomatic corps was, in a word, very complete indeed.

As brilliant a circle would be at no loss for entertainment. Besides all the sights and splendours of the “immense capital,” there were days of such adventures as the following: It occurred to the ambassador from Holland it would be amusing both to his wife and to his young son — the future writer of the “*Mémoires*”— to be present at the farewell audience granted to the diplomatic corps at the camp of the greatest among all Grand Viziers, Ghazi Youssof. “Never shall I forget the coup d’œil of the camp of Daoud Pasha!” exclaims the Baron. It was there the full glory of Oriental luxury burst upon the eyes of the Europeans. The tents of the Grand Vizier, of the shape of parasols, were of an enormous circumference. These tents fairly glittered with gold and silken and velvet embroidered stuffs. The *gardes* were dressed in the greatest splendour; they were

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armed with halberds, pistols, and swords, and formed an imposing mass about the great circle. The Vizier was seated at the very end of the seventh tent, on a large sofa. Before him, in line, stood the ministers. Prince Suzzo was the dragoman, the interpreter of the Porte. He it was who translated the usual compliments and the conversations.

Two ladies dressed as men, formed part of the ministerial suite. Baron Gelder's mother, "who had the curiosity to see the ceremony," and Madame de Heydenstam, the young and pretty wife of the Swedish Minister, had no hesitation, once the project formed, of donning the only attire by means of which their curiosity could be satisfied.

The Grand Vizier received both ladies with that fine distinction in gradation of attentions and compliments of which the Turks seemed, then as now, to have the secret. The Dutch ambassadress was politely served with coffee, by express order of His Highness. To the lady from Holland, however, no compliment, save a subtle smile, was sent. But of the beautiful Swede the Grand Vizier remarked aloud to her husband, who had presented her as his secretary, "He wished he might have secretaries like unto her about him!"

Of the Turks as rulers and people, Baron Gelder's enthusiasm was no less ardent than was Lady Mary's. "In all Christian countries we have very false ideas of the Turks." Their men of letters "read a great deal." Their libraries contained very "profound treatises on Oriental history, on morals, and on

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philosophy.” The higher Turks he found very broad indeed, one Pasha giving to his daughter an education that would do honour to a *demoiselle de France*.

Sultan Selim, had he lived, would have been to Turkey “what Peter the Great was to Russia,” was the estimate of this keen-sighted Dutchman. And it is interesting to note, as one of the changes a hundred years has brought about, that, according to this Dutch writer, it was at Russian atrocities and barbarities the Europe of the eighteenth century shuddered rather than at Turkish acts of cruelty.

The soldier and general who was to follow Napoleon to Moscow, and to give us, in these his “Memoirs,” written twenty years after that disastrous retreat, perhaps one of the most brilliant, as it is assuredly one of the most vivid accounts of the famous campaign, has also sketched, in his incisive manner, the character of the Greeks and Armenians, living in the Constantinople of 1793 :

“The Greeks” (Levantine) “are to-day what they were in the time of Homer, Demosthenes, and Constantine: witty, agreeable, but turbulent, false, subtle, insolent, and superstitious; the race of men, in a word, the most difficult of all others to satisfy, to control, and of all others the least apt at forming a state promising happiness to its own nation, or offering guarantees for the security and calm of its neighbours. . . .

“There is nothing a Phanariot (thus are called the descendants of the old Greek ancestral families who have remained in Constantinople) will not do to satisfy his ambition; corruption, calumny, intrigues,—

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all serve his purpose to destroy a relative, a friend, to obtain in his turn the position of Dragoman to the Porte, or prince (*hospodar*) of Wallachia or Moldavia. Hardly have they attained their ends, than their hatred against Turkish rule and their religious fervour impel them to form *liaisons* with Russia, which always end in treason.

“The Armenians are less turbulent, but are as intriguing as the Greeks and more skilful speculators. Courtiers of the Orient, in Turkey, they are what the Copts are in Egypt, the business men of the great, and all transactions as well as all speculations pass through their hands.”

## II

### “THE UNSPEAKABLE TURK”

In a hundred years and what changes! The Turk is now become the “unspeakable.” Turkey is the nation above all others at which hands must be uplifted, eyes virtuously rolled, and the political garment withheld from compromising contact.

American and European sympathy and interest have gone out, within the past two decades, to the Serbian, to the Bulgarian, and to the Armenian. The Turk, their oppressor, has become the synonym to our sensitive, benevolent, and philanthropic ears, for all that is cruel, vindictive, and mediæval, in point of barbarism.

Yet when one comes to know him, even a little, the Turk is found to be neither so very terrible nor so

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hardened in his brutality as we had supposed him. The thousand and one tales concerning his thirst for human gore, his delight in cruelty for cruelty's sake, his riotous glee in carnage and massacres are discovered to be as disappointingly exaggerated as were the numbers of those who suffered in the "Bulgarian atrocities." The "hundreds of thousands" of Bulgarians, whose wrongs at the hands of the Turkish soldiery at Batak aroused the indignation of all Europe, when the press had found other sources of sensational news, and Mr. Gladstone had discovered a fresh vent for his wordy crusades, these hundreds of thousands of tortured Bulgarians were reduced to a paltry two thousand. One single Bulgarian who had suffered wrong or hurt, not permitted by the laws governing modern warfare, would have been enough to have made American or European protest allowable. It is, however, well to remember, in these days when the Armenians are currently reported to be going through similar atrocities at the hands of the Turkish soldiers, that the "three hundred thousand martyrs" just now figuring as the ghastly nucleus, around which European indignation is centred, that these are figures drawn from inimical sources. In their turn, after the heat of sensationalism is passed, this appalling line of "martyrs" will doubtless be found to present a comparatively small number of the Armenians in revolt.

Whatever may be one's personal conviction concerning Turkey's deeds or her misdeeds, the interest this curious and fascinating country presents is per-

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durable. More closely allied to European sympathies and tastes than the more wholly alien races of China and India, Turkey is also compellingly attractive, and particularly to Americans, as preserving still to our eyes and ears certain vanished forms and customs.

Along the Bosphorus, in the houses and palaces of Pashas and Effendis, there reigns and lives still a strange and wondrous rule of life. Customs and traditions, as old as the earliest nomad tribes that roamed the plains of Sungaria and the desert of Gobi, are still holding millions of men and women in the leash of social law. Persian and Arabian rites, superstitions, and poetry, the justice of Moses, the example of Abraham and Isaac, the luxury and sybaritic sloth of the Byzantine Emperors and peoples, and, of recent years, the modern genius working through reform and invention,— all this strange and marvellous mixture of hereditary laws, religious influences, and civilisations are everywhere traceable in the streets, in the lives, and in the thoughts of the Turkish people.

One of the chief reasons, indeed, why Turkey is found perennially interesting, is because of this her almost feminine sensitive quality of nature. The Turk is plastic; he is responsive to new and reformatory influences. He remains, however, radically and fundamentally a Turk. The mould of his character was formed in remote antiquity. He comes from so very far away, the marvel is the greater, he has become as amazingly modern! It is in this contradiction, and in the surprise it awakens, that every unprejudiced

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Westerner finds the true charm of this remarkable people.

The Turk is so near to us, indeed so many features of his mind and life seem to mirror ours, he seems almost a brother. To know him better, is to feel him sinking into fathomless depths beyond our reach. From the picturesque point of view, it is these very depths — their strangeness, their unknown nature and character — we find at once irresistibly attractive and also irritatingly annoying. Since he is so very nearly a brother, since he at least appears to comprehend the meaning of our civilisation, laws, and governments, why in the name of all that is enlightened, does he not go farther and take the final reformatory plunge — wash the Turk clean out of him and show himself to be the new, modern, clean man? Such is the reformer's point of view.

The traveller, on the contrary, discovers the Turk's chief charm to lie in the fact that Turkey is, largely, Turkey still. To find the "unspeakable Turk" speaking glibly all our speech of life would be to lose one illusion the more. Some parts of our speech he has, however, learned with an amazing aptness.

The prodigious changes and reforms that have swept over Europe and America during the past hundred years have produced almost as great an effect upon Turkey as they have upon Europe itself. As we have seen, the military, warlike, and artistic outbreak that thrilled the centuries of the Renaissance pulsed as far East as the hills that close in about Mt. Olympus, in Asia Minor. The prodigious leaps and bounds taken

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in the past hundred years by the inventive genius of those nations we call civilised, have also, as I have hinted in their turn, overleapt the frontiers of Turkey.

The power of steam upon a piston could not be kept from testing its strength to annihilate the distance between Paris and Constantinople. Below the court of the Seraglio, the shriek of the Orient Express, as it comes to its final rest in the Stamboul Railway Station, brings daily that news of the outside world which is everywhere the doom of fanatical exclusiveness.

Newspapers, in twenty languages, are tendered you in any part of the capital, and in all of the larger Turkish cities. There is a more or less strict censorship of the press. But in Turkey, as in equally despotic Russia, the press is an active, living power. The reforms in education have been as remarkable as have the many other changes you will find noted further on. The difficulty in painting the true portrait of this modernised Turk confronts, however, one at the outset of the undertaking.

To almost all transatlantic readers of books of travel and of the daily press, the Turk is a comprehensive term including all the diverse species of men living south of Austria and Hungary. Bulgarians, Serbians, Montenegrins, Albanians, and Armenians,—surely these are all more or less Turkish ! This is the swift classification made the easier and the more reassuringly correct because of the difficulty involved in separating these little nations, if nations, indeed, any one of these may, as yet, truthfully be called.

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Missionaries still further complicate the confusion existing in the popular mind, by their free use of the word "heathen." In their reference to Bulgarians, Serbians, and Montenegrins who are still Mahometans, this epithet is as indiscriminately applied as it is to the whole of the Turkish people professing the faith of Islâm.

With the comparatively recent revolt of the Greek Christians in the north several exceptions to this somewhat universal classification have been made. The greatly exaggerated "Bulgarian atrocities" made known the hitherto unsuspected fact that Bulgaria called itself Christian. When Servia and Montenegro joined the Bulgarians in their revolt against the Turkish yoke two more "Christian" nations were born out of the vague and misty Eastern fog of "heathendom."

The Armenian made his entrance upon the political stage in similar dramatic fashion. The tribal warfare between the Armenians and Khurds, one that had been going on for centuries, became of European importance when the extortions of the Armenians upon their neighbour Khurds — extortions similar to those practised by the Jew upon Russian subjects, and for which said practices the Czar banished the Jews from his dominions — when the Khurd retaliated upon their oppressors, massacring them wherever found, thus arousing the Armenians to concerted action, — one directed equally against their infuriated victim and their Turkish rulers, whose rule was hateful to them, — with this triple conflict and its later sinister conse-

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quences still another “Christian” nation was differentiated from the “heathendom” of Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above is one version of the origin of the Armenian uprising. A remarkable statement made by the Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, a few months before the revolt of Sassoun, furnishes still another — and far more gruesome — explanation of Armenian methods and practices.

On the 23d of December, 1893, the Rev. Mr. Hamlin published the following statement : “An Armenian revolutionary party is causing great evil and suffering to the missionary work and to the whole Christian population of the Turkish Empire. It is a secret organization and is managed with skill in deceit only known in the East. In a widely distributed pamphlet the following announcement is made at the close: ‘This is the only Armenian party which is leading on the revolutionary party in Armenia. Its centre is Athens, and it has branches in every village and city in Armenia, also in the colonies. . . . Nishan Garabidian, one of the founders of the party, is in America. Those desiring to get further information may communicate with him, etc.’

“A very intelligent gentleman who speaks fluently and correctly English as well as Armenian, and who is an eloquent defender of the revolution, assured me that they have the strongest hopes of preparing the way for Russia’s entrance into Asia Minor to take possession. In answer to the question as to how, he replied, ‘These Huntchagquist bands organized all over the Empire will watch their opportunities to kill Turks and Khurds, will set fire to their villages, and then make their escape into the villages. The enraged Moslems will then rise and fall upon the defenceless Armenians and slaughter them with such barbarities that Russia will enter, in the name of humanity and Christian civilization, to take possession.’

“When I denounced the scheme as atrocious and infernal beyond anything ever known, he calmly replied, ‘It appears so to you, no doubt, but we Armenians are determined to be free. Europe listened to the Bulgarian, and she is free. She will listen to our cry when it goes up in the shriek of our wives and children.’ ”

Mr. Hamlin goes on to state that these revolutionaries are “canny, unprincipled, and cruel. They terrorize their own people by demanding contributions of money under threats of assassination. I have made the mildest possible disclosures of only a few of the abominations of this Huntchagist revolutionary party. It is of Russian origin, Russian gold and Russian craft govern it. Let all missionaries, home and foreign, denounce it.” It is but just to add that at a later period, Mr. Hamlin “explained” away, as far as was possible, the above statements. The

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The modern Turk nowadays finds himself in much the same position as did the later Roman Eastern Emperors. His is the ruling race, his the dominant religion, over the millions of mixed races over whom his Padishah and Khalifa is acknowledged sovereign. Although year after year one vassal state after another has been taken from him; although in Europe Turkey has lost nearly three-fourths of its land and the same proportion of its people in losing Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia, Moldavia, Greece, and Bulgaria (for the latter though nominally a vassal state is practically independent); although the treaty of Berlin in 1878 sounded the death knell of Turkish influence and power in Europe; although the "sick man" is still looked upon as Europe's constitutional political invalid; although financially Turkey is considered a bankrupt and her state the worst administered in Europe, yet is the Turk still the dominant race south of Austria. Her Sultan still rules over nineteen races of people; Islamism, the religion of one-third of the human race, so far from being a dying faith, is making thousands of converts yearly; and Turkey itself, whether considered from the point of view of its being a mere weight in the European equilibrium, or dreaded because of her known resourceful strength, is still a power to be counted with in European councils.

facts remain, however, that the success of the Armenian revolutionary party has, in the interval of the past nine years, verified Mr. Hamlin's most enlightening disclosures. Europe *has* listened to "the shrieks of Armenian wives and children." And English and American gold has been poured into Armenian pockets. The French writer *Séverine* is now exciting fresh interest in the sufferings of the Armenians by her passionate espousal of their cause.

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To learn something of the sources of Turkey's strength and of the secret of her life, laws, character, and religion becomes, therefore, the more interesting in proportion to the difficulties involved in a study of this strange people.

### III

#### “ARE THERE NO HAREMS?”

“Our private life must be walled.” This, the Asiatic rule of life, is the curtain that is rung down before the eager, searching Western gaze. Turkish interiors, both moral and domestic, are hedged about as by a triple wall. In spite of the innovations, changes, and reforms introduced by foreign models, the Turk continues to perpetuate more or less unconsciously the traditions of his fathers. To hold tight to the secret of one's inner life, this is in the blood of the Turk. Frankness is as foreign to the Moslem nature as a subtle complexity of thought is to the American.

In these more emancipated days Turkish reserve is occasionally seen to lower its visor. On the slightest suspicion of indiscreet intrusion the movable face of the helmet is, however, quickly sealed tight to its clasp. A Turk nowadays may speak, for example, of his wife; he counts on your discretion to consider his mention of her as unuttered.

A hundred years ago no graver social breach could be made than for a foreigner to mention or even to hint at the existence of a Moslem's wife. That clever French ambassadress who, when wishing to send to

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the wife of a distinguished Pasha a choice gift, a roll of silk, with delicate reticence remarked, "She was quite sure he would know what to do with the package," was the model of tact the Turk longs instinctively to find reproduced in every foreign man or woman he may chance to meet.

A former minister to a foreign court, well known to us, had married an Alsatian. A French woman, accustomed to the brilliant social life of French and German capitals, the lady naturally found the conditions governing Turkish society as dull as they were irksome. "My wife is always complaining of the want of intellectual interest in Turkish society," M—— Pasha remarked, on one occasion when the talk had turned on the subject of social life in Constantinople. An innocent query as to whether this deficiency was applicable to the European society of Pera and Therapia, or to the more restricted circles of Turkish ladies, was received in perfect silence. The mere mention of the distinguished gentleman's wife was in itself an implied compliment. That swift glimpse of her should have sufficed. Turkish breeding required the lady's immediate dismissal as a conversational topic.

Although of late years among Turks highly placed, it has come to be considered as far more *chic* to have only one wife, this laudable increase in the practice of monogamy does not tend to a complete emancipation, however, from certain well-established Moslem traditions. The mention of one's wife, to a foreigner, is nowadays made the easier when one may truthfully speak of her in the singular number. A Turk may,

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after some months of semi-intimacy, talk somewhat freely indeed of his domestic life, provided always his household is modelled after the European plan of life. The social line is drawn at the point of asking even a lady to call. Frequent visiting between Europeans and Turkish wives, when these are in the singular number, is only possible after a somewhat prolonged residence and much friendly intercourse.

To the casual visitor there is an unexpected embarrassment in finding almost all the Turks one meets, in society, merely married to one wife. The singularity of this singleness is as trying, apparently, to the Turk on certain occasions, as it is eminently disappointing to the European.

“I do so hope the Minister of —— may grant me the honour of visiting his harem,” an American lady remarked with the charming aplomb characteristic of the American woman.

“F—— Pasha would be too delighted, I am sure, only, as it happens, His Excellency has no harem in the sense in which, I presume, most foreigners understand our word,” was the courteous reply of the minor official to whom the remark was addressed. “He has but one wife, as, indeed, we mostly all have.”

“Has n’t any one a harem?” The cry was almost tearful. It had in it the accent of one who felt it to be her right to consider this inconsiderate monogamy of the Turks as a personal grievance. The lady had travelled so many thousands of miles to look both upon the men who confessed, and unashamed, to polygamy, and also to behold the women who, suffering such an out-

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rage, could yet continue to live under the same roof as contentedly with their husband's collection of wives as they might with a collection of cushions! To traverse the plains and deserts of Servia that one might experience at least one new thrill at the end of the long journey, and to be thus balked of the promised sensation! It was more than any one of the thirty millions of charming feminine despots in America could be expected to endure without a protest.

"F——Pasha has a great many children," continued this disappointed investigator of Turkish customs. One might almost have suspected a faint accent of malice in the innocent-featured remark:

"Yes, he has eleven living. His wife is very fond of children."

"Is she Turkish?"

"No, she is a Circassian lady of very good family."

"Ah-h, a Circassian! she must be very beautiful; the boys are so handsome," the pretty American remarked, in a mollified tone. What the lady did not say was written on her reflective features. She obviously felt it was at least something to have run, so to speak, a Circassian to earth. For the "lady" was none, of course; she had been, without doubt, a slave. From a romantic traveller's point of view, if Turks persist in disappointing the world—and marrying as virtuously and dully as every one else—at least to find them marrying a Circassian slave was a trifle more solacing than to have found the single wife of correct Turkish descent.

Did the clever young aide-de-camp read the fair

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American's thoughts? The map of her mind seemed open to him. For he smiled, as if seeing thereon certain lines that pleased him, as he made answer, "Yes, you are quite right; we mostly marry Circassians and almost all our children are beautiful."

Thus it was the curtain screening Mahometan life was courteously rung down.

## IV

### HAREMS AND THE "KAIF"

There are still enough harems throughout Turkey sufficiently equipped with a plurality of wives to satisfy the most exacting of travellers in search of sensation. Even in Constantinople there are Pashas and Effendis rich enough to keep up the old standards of Moslem marital pomp. The majority, however, of the upper ten thousand practise, at least outwardly, the European fashion of monogamy.

That this fashion will continue and increase there is little doubt. Fortunes at best are among the most uncertain of possessions in a land where exile and banishment are as likely to happen as birth and death. The most extravagant gift with which a Turk may present himself is, therefore, a properly stocked harem.

Each one of his four wives must have their separate establishment. Each establishment must have its own slaves, cooks, and equipage. Each wife or oda-lisk must, if she be in the height of the present

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fashion, have her piano, her French gowns, and foreign tutors for her sons and daughters ; and she must besides, be able to dispense a large and continuous hospitality, ever ready to return the *Gargantuan* feasts, the grand luncheon parties, and the *al fresco* fêtes which form the social dissipation of the smart Osmanli feminine world. No one of the wives may be slighted. Each has her legal rights—clearly, exactly defined by scriptural and accepted law. These rights are many ; so numerous, indeed, that after a review of them it is the European rather than the Osmanli women who seem to be still in bondage.

As no Turk can with safety withhold from his wives their enforceable rights, he naturally thinks several times before burdening himself with several wives. Unless his fortune be unusually large he contents himself with the one wife Christian society considers as the essential of an ideal marital state.

The rich young Turks also have travelled ; they have seen the young girls, the clever married women of France, Germany, England, and Austria. On their return to their own country they feel the loss of such stimulating feminine charm, and of such intellectual comradeship. A whole harem of beautiful women is not as satisfying as is the company of one woman who may be a companion as well as mistress and wife.

The young Turk is also in his turn an imitator, a student of foreign ways, of life and of manners. The European, he notes, has, at least, at one and the same time, but one wife. But this single wife is surely

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better than many, for he may present her, introduce her, she may go everywhere, even do everything, in matter of pleasure or sport, that he does. The European, the American wife is not one wife, she is an hundred. She multiplies herself by her diversity, by her infinite variety. *Ergo*, to have but one wife is at once more *chic* and more amusing. But where will the young Turk find such an one among the young Turkish maidens suggested to him by his parents? These young girls will have been well brought up according to the Turkish standards of education. These standards are, however, built upon still more or less harem, not continental, matrimonial modes of life. Will he look among the beautiful Circassians, whose ravishing loveliness is still, as every Turk knows, as easily to be purchased as is his new thoroughbred? Beautiful, even clever in her own way, as the chosen Circassian may be, still the boughten woman represents the old conditions, the old harem, demoralising, stupefying, unregenerate conditions.

For various and excellent reasons, however, beautiful slaves, Circassians or Georgians, are still often preferred as wives by Turks of good standing, to the free maidens of their own race. Marriage with a Turkish young girl is almost as expensive an affair as the setting up of a harem. There are lavish sums necessary for the giving of the numerous wedding presents. The length and expense of wedding festivities themselves might well daunt the stoutest heart. Marriage with a slave, on the contrary, entails no greater outlay than the purchase money. If chosen

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from the household of a great lady such a wife stands as good a chance of being well educated and well bred as a high-born Turkish maiden, for the feminine heads of the best households take great pride in the training and education of their slaves, the more beautiful among them receiving a proportionately higher degree of care.

The Turk who marries a slave marries no one else. The dreaded spectre of the mother-in-law is one he need never fear. The bride's family, having been conveniently lost and forgotten many years before, will never present itself at the right moment for making trouble.

Once the slave is legally married she takes her place, with all the social rights and privileges of an Osmanli wife. The true family life of the Turk begins when he is thus the legal spouse of one or more wives.

Domestic life, our writers would have us believe, is beginning to be one among the lost joys among Western nations. The pace of our feverish, strenuous, excited existence is too rapid to give time for the quieter, duller tread about the family hearth. In Turkey the charms and pleasures of family life are not only enjoyed to the full, they are the more relished and sought for because of the comparative dulness of all outside pleasures.

The life of most Turks may be said to be bounded by the walls of their Selamlik and their Haremlik. Outside of his home, unless he belongs to the court, to the army, to the navy, or to the civil service, a

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Turk in good standing has few other occupations save that of a man of family. His religion forbids him to drink or to gamble ; to dance is to lower one's-self to the rank of slaves ; theatres, operas, shows of any kind, these are dissipations unknown to the Turkish world. The few foreign troupes seen in Pera in the winter season are so mediocre in point of capacity that even a Mussulman might confess himself bored at their operas sung out of tune and their theatrical representations given without talent, and not be considered as wanting in comprehension or taste of European entertainments.

For the man who must live without clubs, golf, or the shooting of big game (the Turk of to-day is not a natural sportsman) ; who may travel only after having obtained royal permission ; whose taste for art, as we understand the word, is as yet comparatively undeveloped ; one who, by virtue of the peculiarities of his climate and the laws of polite living among his people, can therefore neither drink himself to death nor go to the North or to the South Pole in search of adventure,—what sort of life is there left for such a man to lead ?

As it is in the nature of man to kill something, the Turk has made a fine art of killing time. Between his womenkind and his *kaïf*, the Turkish equivalent for *dolce far niente*, he manages to extract a certain amount of delicate and exquisitely satisfactory enjoyment out of that act of being we more actively veined races call the game of life. From the point of view of its being a game, life in Turkey, apart from court

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and governmental circles, is a failure. The struggle, the zest, the eager intensity with which life is lived in certain European countries and throughout America stops short of Turkish frontiers.

Out of the luxurious Eastern soil the breath of another life seems to pass into the nostrils of man. A delicious, an exquisite languor captures senses and mind. To take one's *kaïf* becomes far more important than making a stir in life. To choose a beautiful site, one overlooking a wooded grove, a lake, or a stretch of sea, with snow-capped mountains as a finish to the horizon ; to have perfect gardens, a lovely wife, and numbers of handsome children,—such is the longed-for ideal of most well-to-do Turks. To pass his days in a refined and delicately rapturous contemplation of his "view," with the phantasmagoria of life itself as part of the outlook, thus to dream away existence would be occupation enough for the large majority of the subjects under the Sultan's rule.

Life becomes a true game in Turkey when ambition enters the mind of the Turkish boy or man. Whether he be born the son of a Pasha of three tails or the son of a slave, a Mussulman may aspire to the highest rank or to the greatest official gift in the power of the Sultan to bestow.

Turkey is as democratic as America. There is no hereditary nobility in Turkey ; there is no ruling class ; there is no aristocracy, in the true sense of the word. A man of low origin, even a slave, by his abilities, good looks, or through the intrigues of some influential friend or relative at court, may become a

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high court official, a minister of the Sublime Porte, even Grand Vizier. The history of Turkey teems with sudden, amazing turns in the wheel of fortune. The careers of some of her greatest statesmen, generals, admirals, and viziers have been as replete with adventure, and as richly coloured with wondrous episodes as any hero Dumas or Victor Hugo ever imagined.

In the older days a lad captured in Serbia, Wallachia or Hungary as a spoil of war, trained as soldier and Moslem in the corps of the Janissaries, was often seen to rise to the practical dictatorship of Grand Vizier. Selim the Grim, listening to the counsels of a favorite secretary who urged his ruler to make immediate war on the Egyptian Mamluks, raised Mahomet the secretary to the post of Grand Vizier on the spot. It was Mahomet who objected to so sudden a change in his fortunes, and it was found necessary to administer the bastinado to the reluctant secretary before he professed his willingness to execute the dangerous duties of his high office.

So democratic a rule of social and political life has brought about the inevitable results. All Turkish society is more or less in a foment of anxiety, excitement, and intrigue. Since the lowest may aspire to the highest place, every Turkish youth dreams of being governor over some rich province, minister, or, at the very least, ambassador to some of the great capitals.

The court is the centre of this hot-bed of intrigue. All the rays of hope converge toward the central

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source of patronage and preferment. The personal history of the more influential members of the present court, of some of the ministers of the Sublime Porte, and of certain of the better known governors of the larger *eyalets*, or provinces, would be found as full of romance and as thrilling in adventurous episodes as were the lives of those Grand Viziers who practically ruled Turkey between 1640 and 1757.

The element of danger entering into Turkish advancement, is perhaps not the least alluring feature in the life of the Turkish soldier of fortune.

## V

### THE COMMON PEOPLE AND THE RELIGION OF MAHOMET

For the common people throughout Turkey, life has changed but little, during some hundreds of years.

The Turkish labourer, artisan, mechanic, farmer, is very much the same Turk he was twelve and a half centuries ago. The greatest change that has come to the poorer classes is that in our day their children are compelled to learn to read and write. The reading of newspapers has, also, brought about a corresponding change in the monotony of lives absorbed in an earning of daily bread.

The hamal—the porters—the ferrymen, the caïque-rowers, the bullock drivers, the drivers of pack-horses, the street vendors,—all these shreds and patches of men, as well as the motley sorts and conditions of

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humanity, male and female, whom you see about the streets of Constantinople, these are the brothers and sisters of those whom Mahomet the Conqueror brought with him into the city in the fifteenth century.

These workers, toilers, and mechanics are full of the same superstitions, they are controlled by the same traditions, and they are also as deeply religious as when their ancestors swept the Asian plains. Put a sword in their hands, and they would be as miraculously changed into fighters and soldiers as fanatical and as iconoclastic as are all fighters possessed by a fierce and living faith.

The babies of these humbler Turks still wear any number of amulets against the *fena guz* — the “evil eye.” Beneath the shirt of grown men similar strings of beads would be found worn, with the same hope of averting the dreaded *nazar*. Pilgrimages to the shrines of favourite Dervish saints ; the tying of a rag on the grave of a Dervish to avert a fatal end to some serious illness in the household ; continuous prayers, ablutions, and a rigid adherence to the great Fast of the year, — during the long month of the Ramazan, the Moslem Lent, — throughout the length and breadth of Turkey, the same Arabian and Persian superstitions that have swayed millions of European and Greek Catholics who have known them only as local traditions, under the names of pilgrimages to local saints’ shrines, as *ex votos* or as penance — these are still the comfort and solace of millions of Turks.

The religious fervour is as strong as are the practices of religion ; for the people continue with undiminished

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ardour the strict observances of their faith. The common people are, as I have previously stated, among the last of the truly devout believers, and the religion of Mahomet exactly suits the character and taste of the pious, fervent Turk. No other faith can hope to reach every fold of a nature whose base is still pre-eminently at once war-like and sensuous, fierce yet tender, superstitious yet rational, proud and yet patiently humble. The Koran is all the literature and Bible felt to be necessary to millions upon millions of minds and souls who are still in what may be called a state of high susceptibility to spiritual belief. The millions controlled by this Monotheistic form of religion, as revealed by Mahomet, stretch from the interior of western and southern Africa to India, and from Arabia to the confines of Turkey in Europe. The recent amazing spread of Islamism throughout middle and southern Africa is one of the most interesting features of change and development in that agitated Continent. Black races as well as the Persian, Turkish, Arabian, and the millions among the Indian peoples, have fallen utterly captive to the genii, to the angels, to the peris, to the fates, to the glory of the Mahometan heaven, to the mitigated hell torments, to the awful doom of predestination, to the rapturous certainties of resurrection, and to the assured immortality which the Koran, to its believers, reveals with so clear and certain a voice.

The belief in one God, in the Koran as His absolute, eternal word, in Mahomet as His sole prophet, the last and best, and in Jesus as supreme over all

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who had come before his time — these four points form the foundation of the Moslem faith. Jesus is known under the name of “Rualh-Ullah,” “the Spirit of God.” The Mahometan believes this Jesus to have been miraculously conceived, and by an untainted Virgin. The Moslems were indeed the first to preach this doctrine of “the Spirit of God” as having been born of a virgin.

The Koran itself, both in its teachings and in its laws, has been greatly misunderstood. It was written at a time when even Christianity itself was in a state of peril and heretical insecurity. Its harshest decrees were aimed at the idolatrous Arabians, whom as a nation it was the chief object of Mahomet’s life to convert to his teachings.

Considering the time and period in which the Koran appeared, it is rather a matter of wonderment that its teachings should show the degree of enlightenment which characterise it.

The theistic doctrine of Islamism is peculiarly appealing to a proud and haughty race. Between the lowliest and the greatest and their God — their one God — there is no human barrier. The true strength of Islamism lies in this one great, profound truth, in God being alone divine, all powerful, the Creator of all things, the Avenger of wrong.

The very conception of and belief in so incontrovertible a truth has been found amazingly elevating. As contrasted with the idolatry of the Arabs and the polytheistic worship of former debased systems of the Christian creed, this religion, founded on the funda-

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mental truth of the One God, was enlightenment itself.

Nothing can be simpler than the ritual of the Moslem. The reading of the Koran and prayer, these constitute the sole simple ceremonies. The religious ordinances are equally innumerable. Fasting, daily ablutions, pilgrimages, and good works — such are the sole obligatory rules of conduct given to the pious.

The clergy and the whole of the complicated ecclesiastical system attached to the practice of Catholic and to certain Protestant forms of worship do not exist in the Mahometan religious world. There are no popes, no bishops, no archbishops, no rectors, or high priests, or lower clergy. Imâms, the so-called Moslem priests, are not a consecrated order. They are merely those who, by reason of special studies, or by proof of greater piety, are chosen by the builders of a mosque or its officers to preside over a particular parish. They must pass a certain examination to prove their capacity for the exercise of their few duties. The celebrating of the marriage service; the registering of the marriage contract; religious consolation to the dying; funeral services; the keeping of the primary schools; the giving of certificates of birth, and a certain amount of police duty over the morals of his parish constitute the somewhat mixed religious and administrative duties of a Moslem parish priest. Such time as he can spare for the exercise of his own trade — most Moslem priests are grocers or druggists — and his own family life, keeps the Imâm sufficiently active. His time and chances for interference in the family life of the people

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of his parish are necessarily limited. A Mussulman, therefore, preserves his entire personal freedom, as well as that of his household, though he be a very model of piety. The fact that he sees fit to worship his God—and devoutly to serve Him—does not entail an endless procession of priests in and out of his door, or subject his household to outside clerical influence. No one practice in Catholicism strikes the Mahometan with more amazement, than the freedom with which a European woman is allowed to go to the confessional, and the open influence in Catholic households exercised by Monsieur l'Abbé.

Prayer, the “pillar of religion” and the “key of paradise,” is a rite so sacred, it is one to be observed publicly, chiefly by men. Women must also pray, but, as their presence is supposed to be disturbing to the minds of the devout, they must pray either at home, or in the mosques when their lords are not bowing to and praising their Maker. Public prayer in the Mahometan mosques, by this simple law of the exclusion of women, has been invested with a peculiar dignity. It is the privilege of the male members of a family to pray five times a day before the eyes of men. With no woman to belittle his worship the Mahometan still continues to fill the mosques at the appointed hours of prayer.

The frequency of his prayers makes every Mahometan doubly a Mahometan. The habit of devotion once formed becomes second nature. That which he prays for, in due course of time, the pious Moslem more or less becomes. As his Koran teaches him to

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be kind, patient, humane to animals and to his poor, to be hospitable, and to believe solely in One God, in Mahomet his Prophet, and to serve his Khalifa (Sultan) as he would Mahomet, we find throughout Turkey a whole people amazingly kind, courteous, hospitable ; a people needing no society of prevention of cruelty to dumb beasts, no almshouses nor poor rates ; few perverts to other religions ; and toward their great Khalifa and Ruler—be he good or bad, cruel or kind—behold a people submissive and humble, and yet full of the dignity that comes of a great patience, and of a profoundly loyal nature.

The Koran has accomplished this and similar results upon widely diverse peoples by means of two systems. Each of these was employed by Mahomet in the elaboration of his new religion. One of these systems was based upon his discovery of the fact that to govern many men of many minds a religion, while it may be a *résumé* of many other religions, as was his, yet must such a religion be one whose very simplicity comes as a novelty.

The second of that remarkable man's systems was the building up of his moral and civil laws on the theory that to guide certain races you must make due allowances for the influences of climate and customs. Mahomet, for example, did not invent polygamy. He merely legalised prostitution. He made the wild, the savage men of his time, as well as the more sensuously refined Arabians, with their loose notions about the sexual tie, conform to a rule of life which should make a man responsible for his acts. By having his

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wives and slaves under his own roof, the Mahometan husband became the protector of the women who ministered unto him. As father, also, the duties and responsibilities of the husband and master were extended to the offspring of both sorts of unions. To such unions very strict limitations were made. No Mahometan legally may have more than four women, whether as wives or as concubines.

## VI

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN TURKEY

The rights of women in Turkey were clearly defined some twelve centuries before Christian Europe or America had seen fit to grant either divorce to women or suitable alimony.

While a Mahometan may have one or four wives, as with each or all of his wives, should they be free maidens, he receives a dowry, one-half of such dowry is set aside. In case a husband repudiates his wife, this part of the dowry is returned with her to her father's house. This excellent law is perhaps accountable for the fact that, while a Mahometan has the right to divorce his wife for causes which would seem flippant even in Dakota, a Turk thinks twice before he goes to the extreme of repudiation. "No, no, divorce in Turkey is not popular. In all my acquaintance I do not know one who has divorced!" was gravely stated by a Turkish friend when this most excellent Moslem prohibitive law against impulsive divorces was under discussion.

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For a man to send away his wife that he may be freed from her, perhaps even that he may supplant her, this is not an unknown masculine infirmity even in Christian Europe. To return her clinking to the tune of half of her own dowry, this is an impending calamity to avert which many a Turk turns twice on the hard bed his rueful marriage has laid for him.

There has been a vast amount of pity wasted upon the Moslem woman. It may surprise even the woman suffragist to learn that the laws of Mahomet confer upon women a greater degree of legal protection than any code of laws since the middle Roman law. The more recent liberties and protection granted to married women by the laws of divorce and the exclusive property rights now in force in the United States alone can be properly compared to those in force in Turkey.

Under the Moslem laws the provision for securing to the wife the free and uncontrolled possession of her property is minutely stipulated in the marriage contract. A suitable sum is also arranged for her maintenance in accordance with her husband's rank.

As has been admirably stated by Mr. Stuart-Glennie, Islamism modified the polygamous patriarchal form of marriage as practised among the Semites, greatly to the advantage of women; infinitely to their disadvantage did Christianity arrange the monogamous system of marriage in force among Aryans. Unlegalised prostitution, and of late years, divorce laws in certain countries so loose as to rob marriage itself of all significance, have been among the worst of the

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results of the Christian system. In Moslem countries, on the contrary, divorce is even nowadays rarely or ever resorted to. Monogamy is also gradually replacing polygamy, a change due to the great expense entailed in giving to each wife a separate dwelling, equipage, and staff of servants, to the introduction of the wearing of European garments by women, and to European influences generally.

Slaves are no less provided for, under the laws of Mahomet, than are free women. An odalisk, who is always a slave, if she bear a child to her master must be maintained for life, or she must be set free and married. Her children, whether she be bond or free, have equal rights with the children of the legal wife or wives of the household. A Moslem, in other words, can practically have no sexual relations with any woman without assuming full responsibilities for such intimacy.

Other customs, traditions, and ceremonies give to Moslem woman a fixed and independent position within the walls of her own house. The hanoum, or first head wife, is practically the head of every Turkish household. She is also likely as a rule to remain such, no Turkish parent willingly consenting to see his daughter subject to a first wife. For a second wife, in the rare cases where such are chosen, the husband desirous of extending his sphere of bondage must, as a rule, either take an odalisk or go without. Such a wife, whether freed or not, remains in a state of semi-servitude and obedience to the hanoum.

Mahomet himself was a great lover of women. In

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his choice of those whom he honoured by his changeful affections he appeared to have no fixed standards. Khadijah, the rich and generous widow whom he married, and whose purse and position enabled the prophet to become a notability, was succeeded by beauties of every cast and hue. But Mahomet was among the very rarest of men and lovers; for most men, when they come to the moment of serious law-making for women, forget the tender nature of those whose very weaknesses have been the source of the happiest hours these stern judges may have known. Mahomet, when he turned law-maker, appears to have remembered the pains and weaknesses of every woman he ever loved. He stole most of his laws from Moses. He added certain humane clauses that place him among the most just and sympathetic of all masculine reformers. For the slave and the free, for the divorced and the widowed he provided laws securing to woman in every stage of life maintenance and support according to the state and means of her lover or husband.

He knew women well enough to know that for a wife to have a rival in the house was not so bitter or so dangerous to the household well-being as to have the husband unfaithful abroad. The rivalries between Moslem wives are trials that may the more easily be borne, since the rights of each wife, even to the point of her marital turn, are fixed by law.

Mahomet thought so well of women he could not have enough of them, even in heaven. So far from his denying them the possession of souls, the Koran distinctly asserts that women shall not only be re-

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warded for their good deeds, but that they shall also suffer punishment for their evil ones. The Mahometan women, it is true, are relegated by the prophet to a separate heaven from that open to their fathers, brothers, and husbands. But as these latter are promised the perpetual enjoyment of the paradisiacal women,—a particular species specially manufactured for the reward of the good and brave among men in the celestial regions,—Mahomet's knowledge of the sex may have suggested the inspiring thought that the promise of a continuation of the harem conditions—that of looking at happiness through another woman's eyes—might not be considered as conducive to a satisfactory state of beatitude.

All his heavens are most lavishly peopled with the divinest models of the fair sex. It is made perfectly obvious that, perfect lover as he was himself, it was impossible for Mahomet to conceive of a paradise being such without hosts of "black-eyed nymphs of paradise." Not only is the "faithful" to have "eighty thousand servants, seventy-two wives of the girls of paradise," an enormous tent erected for him of pearls, jacinths, and emeralds, wherein three hundred attendants are to serve him from plates of gold, for the enjoyment of all which the Son of the Faithful is to enjoy perpetual youth, but to the translated Moslem is given two further wondrous privileges. In his future state he need only meet and see the wife or wives he knew on earth whom he cares again to have minister unto him. Should he desire children, the laws of nature them-

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selves are to be suspended ; the houris, or his wives, will only conceive at his express desire, “and such issue shall be conceived, born, and grow up within the space of an hour.” Maternity itself, under such conditions, would be indeed a gift of the gods.

## VII

### SLAVES AND SLAVERY IN TURKEY

The system of slavery exists in the Imperial harem, as it also exists throughout the whole of the Turkish Empire. The public sale of slaves has been suppressed, in deference to European prejudices. Those rows of human merchandise, whose black and white skins, whose crinkled and blond tresses were formerly as much a part of the colour and shows of the Constantinople streets as the necklaced buffaloes or the stately camel trains, these groups of Abyssinians, Georgians, Circassians, and Greeks have been removed from the public gaze only to crowd the thicker, more secret places.

The institution of slavery is as unjustifiable under Moslem law as was our own slave-trade, in our Southern States, contrary to the spirit and teaching of our constitution. To quote a recent English writer, “Slavery as now practised in Turkey is in direct contravention of the law of Islam, which only recognises as legitimate property non-Moslems who have fallen into the power of true believers during war.” Circassians are not non-Moslems, nor are they spoils of

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war. They are Islams, whose faith is as pure as that of their hardened parents who deliberately barter their children's beauty for dollars, and that of the slave dealers who crowd their fragile, human merchandise into miserable little vessels, in the depth of winter, that they may pass through the Black Sea at the season when Russian men-of-war are not scouring the horizon on the lookout for such as they. The Abyssinians are likewise the greater sufferers because of our humanitarian insistence on the suppression of a trade from whose scourge England, America, and Russia have only freed themselves during the past half-century. But the new broom of virtuous reform seeks ever to sweep as clean its neighbour's precincts as it has its own.

So long as the harem exists in Turkey, just so long must slaves be procurable. The internal organisation of the harem is as dependent upon the slave as was the Greek system of civilisation upon its slave foundation. For implicit obedience and profitable service there must be a class of beings who will fulfil blindly the commands of the superior. Slaves alone can be forced to carry out, to the utmost letter of the order, the word of command from their master or mistress.

The institution of polygamy necessitates a certain amount of authority. The supporting base of the polygamous structure is slavery.

The custom that ordains a Moslem woman to veil her face before all mankind save her husband and her nearest male relatives, such a social law alone necessitates the slave, who does not count, being merely the thing, the property of her own master. The eunuch

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also must be a slave, for did such mutilation cease to bring gold into the pockets of the inhuman parent, as well as into the purse of the dealers in such remnants of men, there would be no eunuchs to guard the harem door.

With that note of humanity which characterises most of the laws governing the weak and the unprotected throughout Turkey, domestic slavery in Turkey is minimised in its tyranny. Slavery throughout the Turkish world is tantamount to an enforced domestic service.

Slaves are protected by laws as binding as those that give to Turkish women a legal freedom almost unknown elsewhere. After seven years' servitude the female slave may claim her freedom. This she rarely does, save, of course, in the very exceptional cases where she has been treated with cruelty. The peculiar privileges in matters of education, as well as certain coveted social pleasures, and above all else the gift of a dot and trousseau at her marriage, these advantages make the position of a girl-slave in a good Turkish household superior to the conditions of life possible in the low-caste rank of her parents. To be chosen by a dealer for exportation, to be bought by a hanoum for her beauty, is as great a boon to a poor Circassian as is the possible grandeur of her future elevation to the position of wife or seraïli intoxication itself.

The rule of life for the slave in the Imperial harem is practically the same as that in force throughout Turkish households.

With that fine discrimination in which dealers in

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human merchandise soon become adepts, the girl-slaves, as they advance in years—for they are brought young to the harem—are apportioned to different sorts of labour. The stronger, more muscular negresses become cooks, house-maids, scullery maids, laundresses, or bath-women. Others who are destined by their superior physical or mental attractions to lighter employments are taught certain graces and accomplishments. As any one of these may rise to the high position of a *gueuzdé*—“one on whom the Sultan has cast an eye”—each one of these youthful slaves is carefully trained to the refinements of pose, gesture, and good manners; each must dance, sing, or play some musical instrument; and each must be an adept in the art of performing the formal routine of the strict court etiquette with grace and charm.

When a Kalfa—a lady of the household—discovers in a pupil-slave certain peculiar aptitudes, she is specially trained to develop her talent; she becomes reader, or secretary, or dancer, or an artist on the flute or tambourine. Under a late Sultan a certain number of the seraili were taught to play on European instruments, and a women’s orchestra played selections from the Italian and French operas. In more recent years it is said certain slaves are taught some of the foreign languages, in order that they may act as governesses to the sons and daughters of the wives or favourites of the Sultan.

The training of slaves with a view to making a profit out of their attractions is not an unknown industry, even among Turkish ladies of rank. Beauty and

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accomplishments are always twin stars in the matrimonial firmament. A clever and beautiful girl-slave, well dressed, well mannered, and ambitious, may bring, not only to herself, but to her mistress, a flattering degree of success by marrying and marrying well. Ladies highly placed take great pride in their slaves ; they go about with the more attractive of their household much as a monarch likes to see himself surrounded by officials of handsome and imposing appearance. Slaves richly, sometimes fantastically dressed, the better to show off their points, are a part of every large entertainment, fête, and festivity. The colour and beauty of their garments, their grace, youthful vivacity, and gaiety, add not a little to the splendour of the feasts given by women to women in the Constantinople great world.

A certain amount of freedom is admitted between mistress and slave. The mutual love and devotion also, between the girl who owes everything she is to the owner who has given her the opportunity to show her talents and character, and the mistress who in her slave finds confidante, friend, and ally, this love and attachment is sometimes as touching as it is sublime. For women must everywhere cling to women at certain moments, whether they be within or without harem walls. In the long life struggle there are times and crises when only a woman can be turned to for full and complete sympathy.

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## VIII

### THE IMPERIAL HAREM

Within the walls of the Imperial seraï there are hundreds and hundreds of women. Halls, corridors, apartments *en suite*, salons and huge dining-rooms, or such as are composed of but a single room,—all and every part of the palaces sacred to the harem of the Grand Signior,—these are alive with women, with slaves, and with eunuchs. Along certain of the long halls visiting cards, with the name of the occupant of the rooms within, would be found upon the doors of suite after suite. Within these rooms a nominal freedom is enjoyed by each one of the gueuzdé—or “Eyed”—those on whom the Sultan has cast an eye; but between the host and legion of the adjémis or rustics (young, raw slaves), the pupil-slaves (the alaïks), the menials, and the eunuchs,—actual liberty among the lower ranks of the Sultan’s favourites is, of course, altogether impossible.

A most elaborate and complicated system of court etiquette rules the lives and every action of each inmate of the seraï. Not only is this system of social law necessary to the guidance and rule of so many thousands of women within the same palace walls, this court etiquette itself has come down as an inheritance of past mediæval periods, when a grander state and splendour reigned in the court of the “Great Turk.”

The court of men composing the Sultan’s present household, as we have tried to prove, has been so

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greatly modified that the court of Yildiz is now practically European in its dress and manners. The survival of the Oriental forms of prostration and salutation alone remain as the outward reminders of former Eastern ceremonies and customs.

The modification and change which make that part of His Majesty's court known to foreigners so modern as to seem almost democratic, such radical reforms have apparently stopped short of the seraï.

The Imperial seraï has its own constitution, its own complicated organisation, its discipline, customary laws, and rigid divisions in the matter of rank. It is a world within itself. Its life is as far away and apart from the life and whirl pulsing through the streets, the shops, and the hearts of the men and the women crowding the Constantinople thoroughfares as though no foreigner had ever trod the dusty Pera roads, no press had ever trumpeted the news of the outside world, and the masters of the seraï themselves had never listened to the foreign voices.

As fixed as are the sumptuary laws governing China are the social ones ruling in this court of women. The last outpost of Orientalism within the Imperial household, the seraï is watched and guarded with the greater and more jealous care.

At the head of this feminine court, ruling with autocratic despotism, stands the "Crown of Veiled Heads." This virtual queen regnant is the mother of the reigning Sultan. Once her son seated upon the throne of the Ottomans, his mother is raised to Imperial honor. An oath of obedience to her must be

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taken by every member of the seraï. No one is exempt from this oath. The wives of the Sultan down to the lowest slave within the palace walls becomes subject to the Valideh-Sultan. The title of this feminine autocrat is "The Crown of the Veiled Heads." All petitions and notes must bear this form of address.

The power of the Valideh-Sultan is practically unlimited. Except solely her august son no one may rule over her. The deference paid to her person is strictly laid down by law. None may sit in her presence. None may even appear before her unless an audience has been previously granted. All who thus present themselves must stand with their hands crossed upon their breasts, in attitudes of most profound reverence. "Our lady" must preface every sentence. So rigid is the etiquette ruling the deference paid to this the virtual Empress of the Ottoman court, that all must present themselves in full dress when admitted to the royal presence.

The word of the Valideh-Sultan throughout the seraï is law. Her royal permission is necessary for the going forth beyond the walls of every lady within the palace. No message may be presented to her Imperial son save through her hands. The four legitimate wives of the Sultan are as absolutely subject to their Imperial mother-in-law as is each and every one of the most insignificant gueuzdé.

For the execution of so vast and uxorious a power "The Crown of Veiled Heads" naturally must have her subordinates. The chief officials of the

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palace are the Lady of the Treasury, the Mistress of the Robes, the Keeper of the Seals, the Lady Chaplain, the Lady Coffee Server, the Mistress of the Sherbets, etc. Each of these ladies, in their turn, have their subordinates. These Kalfas (mistresses) have their *dairas*, their separate establishments.

Beyond the walls of the palace the head of this court of women extends her power and influence. Hers is the influence literally behind the throne. Scarcely a wife or even the newest, cleverest, or most beautiful favorite exercises an authority equal to that which emanates from the counsel or suggestion of this “Crown of Veiled Heads.” That wisdom which is supposed to be inseparable from age is held to be her gift ; released from the “furious monsters” of the youthful passions of jealousy, love, and the coarser ambitions, in the mother of the “Great Turk” the wives, as well as the King of kings himself, are each and all supposed to find an inexhaustible source of help and wise guidance. Character, however, has played its never-failing rôle of supremacy upon this strange and wondrous stage of the seraï as it has elsewhere, in all places, ages, and stations. Though as Valideh-Sultan, the mother of the Sultan may rule supreme as queen and empress of the Ottoman court of women ; though her missives are lifted to the lips of Grand Viziers on the slightest communication of her wishes to the Sublime Porte ; though the poor prostrate themselves before her as she proceeds in the royal state of her magnificence of equipage and guards to mosques, or to take the air of the hills ; yet not once

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but again and again has she as the “Crown of Veiled Heads” been known to bow her own before such a wife as was the beauteous Russian Roxalana, she who ruled the mighty heart and brain of Suleyman the Magnificent; or before the lovely Venetian, the Sultana Sofiyé or Baffa, whose incompetent husband Murad III. placed in her energetic hands the true wand of power.

No later than the days of His Majesty Abdul-Medjid was the palace torn and rent in its most secret rulings by the dazzling, overmastering influence of the wondrously beautiful “Lady of Cairo.” A mere slave, this Besmi became the legal wife of the infatuated Sultan. Having been freed and adopted by the Princess Misrili Hanoum, even a Sultan must either make this Besmi, once a slave, his wife or forever regret her. The laws that seem to weigh only upon the weak and defenceless, within the harem walls, are equally stringent and binding upon the Lord of this Ottoman state Institution, the Imperial seraï.

## IX

### HAREM DISTRACTIONS AND TURKISH HOUSEHOLDS

With the head and base of the Imperial harem thus established, we find the hundreds of women within the haremlik walls each having her separate place and state.

Next in rank to the “Crown of the Veiled Heads” comes the mother of the heir apparent. This Bash

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Kadui Effendi is of superior rank to the second, third, and fourth Kadui Effendis. Below these four Imperial wives come the Hanoum Effendis, the mothers of the Sultan's sometimes somewhat numerous family. The family of the present Sultan is thought to be comparatively limited. He has but thirteen living children.

After the Hanoums Effendis come the fringes upon this ample matrimonial mantle. There are the favourites or "ikbals;" these in their turn have others to look down upon. There are still the gueuzdés — the "Eyed." Any one of these two latter may, by giving birth to a child, become a Hanoum Effendi.

The state reigning within the Imperial harem may be gauged when it is remembered that to each of these ladies, save only the "Eyed," a *dairas* is given. This *dairas* comprises an allowance of money, a separate suite of apartments, with an attendant train of servants, slaves, and eunuchs.

The Imperial princesses, the Sultan's unmarried daughters, also have their *dairas*. These young princesses live in the midst of this strange world of women a petted, hothouse-bred existence. Surrounded by flatterers, they know neither restraint nor any law save that of their own wills and the severe rule of the harem etiquette. At an early age—at sixteen or less—they are given a palace, a magnificent trousseau, a large allowance in money, and a husband. The latter is accepted with about the same degree of joy as are the other and equally entertaining adjuncts of the married state. For over the husband, be he minister

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or Pasha, an Imperial princess reigns as she does over her palace, her slaves, and her children. The daughters of the Sultan are, indeed, perhaps the happiest, in point of freedom, of any of the women in the whole Turkish realm. Owing to their high rank, they not only take precedence of their husbands, but many of the restraints ruling their sex are not enforced upon the daughters of the Padishah.

Within the satin-hung and divan-cushioned haremlik of Yildiz what are the hopes, aspirations, occupations, the pleasures and amusements, of this great multitude of women?

If I should answer that the daily lives of the majority of these ladies correspond more or less to the lives of thousands of well-to-do women throughout Europe and America I should be met by a storm of indignant denial. Yet such is, in the main, the truth.

The Imperial wives and hanoums, having families and more or less large and complicated establishments to look after, are forced to lead more or less sedentary, domestic lives. The education and physical training of their children is an occupation in itself. The management of their households demands the personal surveillance necessary, in any country, to the keeping of a house in good order.

There is social stir and excitement enough in this feminine Constantinople world to keep its women almost as wearied with social gaieties as are certain of our American ladies, whose luncheons, musicals, card-parties, and teas make their days one long dissipation.

The ladies within the Imperial harem are constantly

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in demand for all the fêtes and festivities given by the great world of the Turkish capital. No marriage, no party of circumcision, no fête in honour of a *débutante* passing from the state of djahél or “ignorant” to the condition of khamil or “perfect” (a ceremony proclaiming her as having reached the marriageable age), no ceremony of any kind is considered complete without the presence of a lady of the Imperial household.

An ex-seraïli at the very least must bring her superior grace, her delicate refinements of pose, gesture, and bearing, and, above all, that surest betrayal of her Imperial training, her seraï accent, to give to a Turkish festivity its crowning distinction.

With visits to the palaces of the royal princesses; with other obligatory calls to the widows of former Sultans immured in their truly prison-like retreat at Seraglio Point; with continual *al fresco* fêtes, luncheon parties, musicals, caïque parties on the Bosphorus or to the open sea; with donkey rides, and the outings in the boats and steam launches on the ponds at Yildiz; together with the delight of the shopping tours in the bazaars and the open-air excursions on feast and festival days to the Sweet Waters of Asia or to those of Europe, there are diversions and amusements enough offered to the women of the Sultan’s harem to stand comparison with those invented by the women of a free republic for their own entertainment.

Besides the above distractions, through the halls, corridors, and *dairas* of the Imperial household there runs an uninterrupted, continuous flutter and excitement. There was never a court without intrigue; and

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plotting and counterplotting flourishes into abnormal growth under an autocrat.

When the law forbidding Sultans to marry native Turkish maidens was made the Ottoman legislators forgot, in their haste to separate their Sultan from undue Turkish influence, two important truths. In limiting the choice of the Sultan to wives of slave origin, his advisers did not consider that women of low-caste origin are far more susceptible to the baser forms of intrigue than are those women in whom blood and family tradition have developed the nobler instincts of honour. It is quite possible the unprogressive character of so many of the Sultans may be directly traceable to their maternal inheritances. For there is scarcely a great man or great ruler who has not had a noble-minded mother.

The second important factor in the social organisation of the Sultan's life, in ordaining the rules governing his marital relations, was the entire forgetfulness of the fact that the Sultan was no god—but a mere man. Every one of his wives and favourites would have, naturally, but one sole object in life. Being women, to dominate and to influence, as well as to seduce and capture this Lord of lords would be the chief end of every woman who was allowed to approach him.

Harem life; therefore, has not always been as dull and unvaried as it has been painted. With mutual jealousies, rivalries, feuds, and wrongs to keep pulses stirring and brains alert; with the petty ambitions of a world self-centred and looked up to by all the outer

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feminine world ; with the son of every wife “the little lion” of every *dairas*, the one sole object of adoration, the hope of hopes, the prodigy of prodigies, to push and to educate ; with outdoor and indoor feasts to enliven and to invite to personal display,—Kaduis Effendis and Hanoums Effendis lead an exceedingly active, luxurious, and diversified existence.

The maiden who, on the occasion of the feast of Bairam, the Moslem Easter, is chosen among the trained slaves as the gift of the year, the offering of the nation to the Sultan,—one tendered him by the hand of his mother,—this maiden who sees herself gracefully renounced, as is the custom of the present Sultan, and given in immediate marriage to some subordinate of the palace, finds herself the victim of a supreme disillusion. Hopes of high place, visions of final marital recognition, possibilities of the coveted, the intoxicating position of “Crown of Veiled Heads” coming to her through the reign of the son of her womb,—all these illusions lie shattered for ever.

As ex-seraili the discarded slave will, however, always have a certain distinction. Her continued relations with the palace will make her husband show her a perpetual deference. Her acquaintances will, also, know how to please her by paying court to one who has free entrance to the palace.

The ruler, king, husband, lover of all these women has no such chances of escape as has the ex-seraili. All his life, from his earliest boyhood’s days, when he was still the inmate of the kafe—“the cage” (the house wherein a young heir to the throne is virtually

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kept prisoner, with his corps of tutors, his ten or twelve maidens, his books, and his slaves)—until the moment when, dying, each and all of his wives are admitted to hear their Imperial husband's last behests,—surely the man who passes through such a world of women and remains a man, with a man's virility of brain and power of will, is a wonder indeed among wonders.

“Never listen to the counsels of women,” was one of the “four rules of conduct” given, on his death-bed, by the famous Vizier Mohammed Kiuprili to the young Sultan Mohammed IV. Was this admonition a commentary on the harem system, or merely the result of one widely versed in knowledge of the sex?

It is now some few years since His Majesty has made known his desire that foreign ladies should no longer be admitted into the Imperial harem. It has been whispered throughout Constantinople, however, that this exclusion of foreign visitors has been due rather to the expressed wish of certain ladies of the Imperial household than to any fiat issuing from the royal lips.

A reported conversation held between the wife of a certain government official high in office, and an ex-seraili married to a somewhat elderly Pasha made the point of view of modern Turkish ladies regarding the visits of perfect strangers unmistakably clear:—

“Why, after all, should we be expected to receive American or English ladies who are entirely unknown

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to us? We no longer wear the old dress. We dress as they do, only our gowns are more splendid. They wear muslins, even in public. Who of us would go abroad with so poor a gown? If they come to pay us a visit, it is that they may see us, look upon us, scrutinise us as they would actresses in a play. Why should we be willing to put on a dress we have discarded, and go into our old-fashioned Turkish rooms, to play the play they have come to see? When my husband asked me lately to receive the wives of two great Americans and the wife of Admiral — the English admiral whose ship is in port — I answered, ‘ My dear, I dress as these ladies dress ; I smoke cigarettes, as they smoke them ; my rooms are as exact a copy of theirs as I can make them ; if they come to see a Turkish wife and a Turkish interior it is not here they had best come. Let them go to M—— Bey’s household ; there they will see the real thing.’ ”

The Pasha’s lady laughed immoderately, at this final sally. For the palace of the Lady M—— was known throughout Stamboul as being a mediæval curiosity in point of dirt, ill-dressed slaves, and general untidiness.

The wife of the high official was herself a model housekeeper. As her husband had always taken her with him on his travels, she had not only been to Egypt, but also to Paris. Her house and household were thoroughly European. The lady was an authority on the manner of hanging Parisian draperies ; she it was who could be depended upon to show one how European clothes may be worn so that one

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could be certain of wearing the correct number of petticoats, however uncomfortable these might be; and to tell one just how frequent must be the vigorous massage of the skilled foreign *masseuse*, whom the Lady H—— Pasha had introduced into the upper ten thousand Turkish world of Constantinople.

In less exalted circles, European methods of living and European habits and ways of looking at life are sufficiently prevalent, in the more highly educated Turkish society, to have established a standard of development and of good taste.

A Turkish friend of ours lived with his wife in a large and fine house. The house stood on the banks of the Bosphorus, in one of the most beautiful of the villages on that incomparable shore. Within the great house four families were gathered, in patriarchal fashion. All were either the sons or daughters, with their wives or husbands and children, of the head of the house—a retired naval officer. This large family, with as numerous a corps of servants, lived an harmonious, tranquil, and domestic life. Some of the ladies of the household spoke foreign languages. These and their sisters and sisters-in-law read not only their own, but French, English, and German books and newspapers. For these ladies and their families there were frequent caïque and driving excursions, to vary the monotony of the daily domestic round.

The men of the family, after their duties at the palace or at their various counting-houses, returned home either to join in the family outings, to make or to receive the calls of their relatives (there is com-

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paratively little interchange of masculine social visiting in good Turkish society), to fish in the waters of the Bosphorus at their doors, to read, or to while away time in watching the never-ending, changeful water-life beyond their windows. The evenings were mostly spent in the playing of cards, — a game to which Turks are passionately devoted.

The one wife of each of these four husbands was as much a matter of course, — the chosen wife, as greatly beloved and as tenderly respected, — as any of the countless thousands of wives in our happier country, where man, conscious of his inferiority, enshrines his wife as priestess, goddess, and uncrowned queen.

Of the delicacy of sentiment prevalent among Turkish gentlemen towards their wives I was greatly struck, on two occasions. In walking through the crowded Pera La Grande Rue one late afternoon, I encountered a gentleman whom we had met repeatedly during our stay in that city. He was immaculately garbed in the latest European-cut raiment. In spite of his bravery of attire, however, he did not disdain to be seen carrying a bundle. The latter was a round box, laden, apparently, with a heavy weight.

“It is for my wife. It is ‘Turkish Delight,’ of which she is very fond. It is bad for her, I tell her, but since she adores it I continue to take it to her. We have this little custom, you see, yes, to take our wives a gift, however little — every day — when we return to our homes.” And our friend, with his perfectly fitting gloves and his smartly adjusted fez and his large round box, bowed and smiled with the

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same grace with which he had made his first ceremonious visit.

Shortly before our departure it pleased His Majesty the Sultan to confer upon our friend Mustafa Bey, the aide-de-camp appointed as escort to General Porter, as a mark of his approbation, a decoration of the higher order. “I shall carry it with ‘four hands,’ as we say, dear lady, until I can show it, at home. Believe me, it is my wife who will be made very happy,” was Mustafa Bey’s comment, and the sole one, save his own personal gratitude at receiving so distinguishing a mark of his Majesty’s favour.

## X

### TURKISH REFORMS AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

The changes brought about in Turkish social life have been the results of reforms and upheavals in governmental, educational, and legal laws and privileges.

When Lord Palmerston said in 1856 that “Turkey had made more progress than any other nation in Europe” his statement referred to the changes and reforms instituted by Sultans in the early half of the nineteenth century. Sultans were among the first to listen to the foreign voices.

Two hundred and fifty years ago the approaching “decline of the sick man” was announced as imminent by England’s minister to the Porte; his “total collapse” was one “for which Europe must be on the lookout.” Europe, during the succeeding centuries,

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has been on the keenest possible outlook for Turkey's expected death-bed agonies ever since that English diplomatist's prophetic announcement. Murad IV, Mahmoud the Reformer, and Abdul Hamid II have been the three Sultans, since Suleyman's supremacy of empire, who have given Europe the not altogether agreeable surprise of presenting the aspect of an interesting invalid with astonishing powers of recuperation. As early as the dawn of the present century Mahmoud II began that series of systematic reforms which are still going on year after year, continued by the present Sultan.

With Mahmoud's reign the new, more modernised Turkey began its existence. The mediævalism of the court at Seraglio Point, its grandeur of costume and pageantry, gave way to a court patterned more and more, as years went on, on the fashions and ceremonies prevalent in European courts. Old Turkey disappeared for ever, along with its jewelled girdles, its aigrette-trimmed monstrous turbans, its sables, and gold-wrought robes.

Certain mediæval habits of mind and Asiatic customs went along with the dropping of state robes and the lost pomp and grandeur. The throwing of ambassadors into the dark dungeons of the Seven Towers, to furnish, possibly, a series of banquets to scampering rhodentia while Turkey and the foreign power represented by the unlucky envoy were deciding which army was the stronger — this summary method of punishing an enemy's representative became impossible once the right of way through the Dardanelles

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had been granted to Russia. This right of way once given, with the northern gates of the East, with Hungary and Bulgaria also opened, and Europe sent its curious-eyed travellers to look upon the “Queen of Cities.”

With the increase of travel one by one certain superstitions and the more rigid Moslem customs have disappeared. Sultans were the first to lead the way in the dispensing of gracious courtesies. Selima III, Mahmoud II, and Abdul Medjid were models of the highest type of sovereigns possessing perfect manners. These Sultans would have been as incapable of the least courtesy towards a foreign visitor as their predecessors would disdainfully have proved their right to show their Moslem contempt of *Giaours*. To touch an infidel was formerly regarded as contamination ; to enter his house was to suffer defilement. With the influx of foreign visitors the Turks — at heart and by training the most courteous of people — soon learned to give the “handshake,” with a perfect tact and grace. With their Sultans proffering elaborate banquets to foreign ambassadors, the old-time horror of defilement became a superstition to be laughed at among the upper classes.

With the breaking-down of foolish social barriers other cruel customs became equally obsolete. Since the time of Mahmoud II we have the word of one of our ministers that “there has been no more drowning in sacks of wives and odalisks, no decapitation of officials, and no strangulation of deposed Sultans or of brothers of reigning Sultans. With the death

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of Mahmoud such cruelties, which had the sanction of legality in Greek and Roman custom, ceased." Other horrors, also, were abolished. The bastinado was forbidden. The laws ordaining the confiscation of goods and property, in case of death or banishment, were repealed. Torture was to be abolished ; certain obnoxious taxes were removed from the statute laws ; and the admission of Christian evidence in Moslem courts, as well as many other modern and humane laws, were introduced.

In the enthusiasm for these new doctrines and laws, and the promise they offered for the elevation and energising of his people, Sultan Abdul Medjid proclaimed his desire to "make the political, civil, and religious conditions so equal between Mussulman and Christian of every denomination throughout the Empire that there no longer would be under the laws of the Sultan but one and the same people under different races and religions. In a word, to nationalise all the fragments of nations that cover the soil of Turkey by so much impartiality, amenity, equality, and toleration that each of these populations should find its honour, its conscience, its security interested in concurring toward the maintenance of the Empire in a species of monarchical confederation under the auspices of the Sultan."

These "brave words" were incorporated in "The Illustrious Writing of the Rose Garden." This, the Hatti-Cherif of Gul-Hané, was the Magna Charta of freedom and guarantee of security to rajah and Christian alike. "The Illustrious Writing" came from

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the hand of Sultan Abdul Medjid. The flowery designation of "Rose Garden" was to indicate the place wherein, in the old Seraglio rose garden, this happy augury of Christian security was proclaimed.

It is now fifty years or more since the "Illustrious Writing" gave to Protestant and to Catholic, as well as to converted Mussulman, liberty and protection. As in the case of many other Turkish laws, this promised religious toleration has not always been held sacred. With the revolt of the Bulgarians, and the more recent and more secret conspiracies among Armenians, the indignation of the Christian world has been aroused by the cruelty with which Turkey has pursued these believers in the Greek form of Christian worship. These attacks upon Christians, it should in justice be remembered, however, have only been made when the Christians subject to Turkey have either revolted or have been found conspiring against the rule of the Padishah.

Christians in Constantinople are as safe to-day as they are in Paris or London. This was proved in the recent outbreak of the Armenians in the capital. The exact knowledge among Turkish officials of the number, race, religion, and dwelling of every one of the nineteen different races inhabiting the Turkish capital was marvellously demonstrated in that swift and terrible punishment meted out to the Armenian conspirators. No single mistake was made. Armenians were picked out with as exact and unerring a certainty in the crowded Galata quarter as though each Armenian had been personally known to the Imperial

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troops. Not a single Christian of any other race or sect, not a single Jew, Greek, Persian, or Catholic, suffered hurt or harm.

Those ladies and gentlemen of the various foreign embassies who sat dressed and armed, with their boxes, ready for flight, during those two dreadful days and nights when the sword of Islam throughout Galata was cutting down conspiracy as a scythe sweeps into ripe grain, need have had no fear. The Sultans of our day have been taught their lesson in international laws. The "Illustrious Writing" is in no sense a dead letter.

For the results of the missions and the foreign college and schools upon Turks and Turkey one must look rather to the retroactive effects upon both rulers and people, of our systems of life and education, than to strictly religious results. A missionary, a twenty years' resident of Stamboul, in a recent book on his mission work, confesses it is chiefly through "character" that Christian workers may hope to influence Moslems.

The result of the influence exercised by Robert College upon the educational systems now in vogue in all the higher Turkish schools has been incalculable.

When in 1859 the doubtful experiment of establishing an American college under Protestant Christian teachers was first suggested, there was the usual storm of opposition.

When the permit for the college was presented to the Porte, the minister of public instruction displayed in his answer an unexpected degree of frankness. Sami

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Pasha declared openly that “the Christian communities in the Empire already had more schools, more books, more education and intelligence than the Moslem inhabitants, and his business was to bring the Moslem schools up to a level with the Christian schools.”

The requested permission to erect the college on the shores of the Bosphorus induced another form of opposition.

For over four hundred years the Turkish government had guarded the banks of the Bosphorus from the inroads of all foreigners. The Jesuits had used all their ingenuity, craft, influence, and political power to obtain a footing on those coveted shores. But the Moslems had held firm.

Russian as well as Catholic interests were, therefore, arrayed against the new enterprise. But when did an American ever allow himself the disagreeable surprise of being beaten? The “to-morrow” of the Porte took seven years to fulfil its promise to look into certain “formalities.” Mr. Robert and Missionary Hamlin waited those seven years, with the perfect patience of those who intend to succeed. At the end of that time his Highness A’ali Pasha sent a note to the following effect: “Please inform Mr. Hamlin that he may begin the building of the college when he pleases. No one will interfere with him, and in a few days an Imperial irade will be given to him.”

An Imperial irade is a tenure of property at once the safest, the most sacred, and consequently the most valued, in all Turkey.

What neither Jew nor Jesuit, nor Russian nor

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Greek, in six centuries had been able to accomplish had been granted to a free republic.

What the Turkish point of view may have been, in permitting the establishment of such an institution in her most rigidly guarded territory, it is impossible to divine.

The Oriental is not, however, born out of the East to be last in the race of human cunning. "Behold," he presumably says in his wisdom, "the *Giaour* comes and brings his schools with him. Everything he brings with him — books, and new languages, and all the secrets of Western learning. He is filled with an unutterable longing to teach us all he knows. Let us learn all he has to teach. We will take what we find to be worth while; all that is good and wise for us to take, that will we diligently learn and remember. All else is as naught. For his gods are not like unto our One God, nor will they ever be, nor are their prophets like unto Mahomet. But Europe is near and cometh ever nearer, and behold! we must learn something of her ways in order to defeat her."

The Moslem goes in under our flag to learn our speech, our classics, our ways, and our tricks of thought. Once he has captured them he returns to the fastnesses of his more or less unalterable Moslem nature. He will proceed to practise upon his Western brother, but only in ways of self-defence, the new weapons whose use and value he has thus successfully mastered. As for any fear in high quarters that numbers of Turkish subjects will turn Protestant or Catholic, the number of such is so inconsiderable and the character of such

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converts so worthless, as judged by Moslem standards, that the Bosphorus might be lined with foreign colleges and Sultans would still continue to protect them with "Illustrious Writings," so little do the Turkish rulers fear their religious influence.

Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Bulgarians, Albanians, and Montenegrins are those, as we have seen, who chiefly crowd the halls of Robert College. The Turks who enter the college, as Dr. Washburn stated, rarely graduate. The seeds of European and of American ideals of life, liberty, and of individualism sink into the already overturned soil of fiery young revolutionaries. And presently these seeds bear fruit. It is no discredit — it is surely proof of the vitality of the teachings emanating from such foreign schools of learning — to learn, from those who know, that two-thirds of all the conspiracies and plots for overturning the hated Turkish yoke in Bulgaria, or Armenia, or other disaffected Turkish provinces, may be directly traced through the track of the fiery young revolutionaries who have been graduated from either Robert College, or from some other foreign mission school.

Yet such is Turkish reverence for law and for the concession once granted to Robert College by an Imperial irade, such the well-grounded Turkish adherence also, to one of Mahomet's strictest religious injunctions, "Let there be no violence in religion," that not only does Robert College stand unmolested on the banks of the Bosphorus, but upon its flag-staff our flag of freedom is allowed to unfurl its stars and stripes to every breeze that can capture it. In all

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Europe, even in our own wide land, where every religion is safe, as men of every color, save one, may hope for citizenship, is there to be found another such instance of magnanimity and distinguished courtesy ? I doubt it. The test would be, were it not for a certain clause in our Federal Statute, for a Sultan to suggest to the authorities at Albany the erection of a mosque and of a Turkish school on the banks of the Hudson, with permission to fly the Turkish flag. Were I Sultan I fear I should be tempted to apply this test of international courtesy, in sober earnest and in spite of the Federal clause.

The principal reforms instituted by the present Sultan have been confined almost wholly to educational and military developments.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II is too clever himself not to have an intellectual reverence for learning. Schools — primary as well as higher schools — have been established throughout the Ottoman Empire.

The education of children is now compulsory throughout Turkey ; every Turkish subject is compelled to register his child, whether male or female, for admission into the public schools. The elements of grammar, the four rules of arithmetic, lessons in writing, and above all else the learning of certain portions of the Koran by heart, such is the teaching in the schools. It is chiefly in the superior, in the military and naval schools and the schools of medicine, that the great changes in public instruction introduced by the present Sultan are to be looked for. The programme of studies in the Imperial lyceum

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includes a formidable array of subjects. Turkish history and literature ; the Arabic language and literature ; the Persian language ; mathematics, philosophy, physics, history, design, geography, book-keeping, the Greek language, French calligraphy, the German, English, Italian, and French languages, and gymnastics, such is the curriculum. The wonder evoked in finding every Turk one may chance to meet among the wealthier governing class speaking — and fluently — French, English, Greek, or German, after such a revelation of the educational opportunities offered to students, becomes no marvel. The Turk has a natural aptitude for languages ; this talent is fostered by the attention paid to the teaching in the schools of these foreign tongues. For this teaching the best European teachers are secured.

One department of learning we Americans might well copy from the Turks. In the Lycée Impérial an “Administrative School” has been in existence for some two decades. In this school Turkish subjects are trained to a knowledge of the laws and the government of their country. The curriculum of this school is as varied as it is broad ; sanitation, agriculture, literature, geography, history, chemistry, mining, engineering, cosmography, zoölogy, government, finance, economy, legislation, commercial and international law, as well as French, Arabic, Persian — here is what the young Turk is supposed to absorb and digest before he is qualified to enter, even as a clerk, a government bureau.

The rise of men thus trained, to the difficult posts of foreign ambassadors, ministers of foreign affairs and

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of justice, and to governors of great provinces, proves the value of such a school. The finish and intellectual breadth and culture of the distinguished gentlemen forming the council of the Sublime Porte and of the Court of Yildiz becomes entirely comprehensible after even a cursory review of such educational opportunities.

The models of these schools have been the best French, English, and American systems of higher education. The changes in the intellectual life of the upper class Mahometans brought about by such schools has been nothing short of revolutionary. The outlook of all the thinking forces of the nation or nations composing the composite Turkish world has been almost completely changed. The appetite for learning, always active in Oriental minds, once thus excited, has become almost universal among the middle and higher Turkish classes. Young men who cannot avail themselves of the opportunities given to those who are to enter upon either a military, naval, or administrative career either go abroad to the foreign universities or flock to the American college. No Turk, nowadays, consents to his sons being less well trained, in the modern meaning of the word, than is any other youth of any civilised country.

Turkey's true progress is to be measured by her intellectual discontent among the upper intellectual classes, and by the desire among the common people for those easier, freer conditions of life enjoyed by her neighbours — by that Turkey in Europe which is Turkey no longer.

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“Thirty years ago, and even quite enlightened Turks did not know what progress meant. We were not ready for the new movement. Progress to all of us meant heresy, some new form of infidel horror. But in thirty years what a change! We know now what we want.”

“And that is?” I asked of the clever, brilliant Turk who, as far away as Paris, had begun to open his heart on the subject nearest to it, his country and her wants, her needs, and her dangers. After the first outburst the instinct of reticence had come to seal his lips. He had stopped short. He was, however, induced to go on.

“Ah-h—what is there we do not want? We want all that you have, all that France has, all that England gives to her children. We want freedom—freedom to work, to enrich both ourselves and our country. We want railroads and telegraphs and trolley-cars.”

“Oh, no, no! Let there be one country where the ears are not tortured and nervous systems a wreck!” I protested.

“The trolley car is the Magna Charta of the poor, as well as their flying carpet. It is the great civiliser.”

“The great commoniser, you mean.”

“Well!” laughed — Bey with his comfortable Turk’s laugh, “yes, it is a commoniser, if you will. But wherever you see the trolley you will find the people already civilised, free. It breaks down barriers, it makes many people one. Look at Budapest. Before the trolleys came, there were a dozen people, all enemies, in the town; now all are friends. They

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travel together all day long from street to street. But, even more than the trolleys, we want so many other things ! And now we are ready for them all !

“ For see,” cried my friend, as he warmed to the subject that alone could arouse the full flame of his enthusiasm, “ see what we have, all that we are. We Turks have our poverty, and poverty is a good thing for the people. We are not spoiled by luxury, like the European. We can do without many things, without money ; for instance, look at our soldiers, they are poor, yet how obedient, how brave they are !

“ We have our religion, — and it goes very deep, our religion,— it is a part, the greater part, of the daily life of our people ; and when men still pray openly, without shame, then is a nation still strong and virtuous.”

“ And yet,” I murmured, “ you, for instance, you are no more Mahometan than I am.”

“ Oh ! ” — Bey laughed, “ not in creed, no. But once born a Mahometan always a Mahometan. I should go with my people ; feel as they do, fight as they fight, suffer — I hope — as they know how to suffer. There is another great thing we have — a wonderfully patient, industrious, long-suffering people. The Turk is a good worker. It is only the official who is lazy — I ought to know. I have been one.” And again the rich, musical laugh rang out.

After a moment the dark eyes became serious once more. And our friend went on : “ As you see, everything is ready, the people are ready ; they

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come with the best of all gifts to their ruler, they bring their patriotism, their religious fervour, their poverty, their longing to work that they may lighten it. They will give everything if only they are given certain things in return. But, alas! when it comes to progress, in the true meaning of the word, we feel ourselves to be in such a hopeless situation. Ah! if Europe would but let us alone, only for a little time, only for a quarter of a century. How much we could do! We would give Europe a great surprise. But that is what she does not intend to allow us to give her. And so we are always being pressed, harassed; we have to fight for our very breath. How can we expect our finances to be improved, our people really to grow, when we are fighting for our very lives? And yet we move slowly, slowly, even as glaciers move, for we are all obedient to the same laws of force and motion, whether we be Turks or Christians."

Thousands of educated Turks have the same longings and desires for their people—for themselves. These are neither revolutionists nor are they disloyal subjects. These men are merely newly awakened to the necessities, longings, trials, and possibilities of an intelligent and strong people who have borne much, who, therefore, could be trusted to do much.

The Turks who see this see more. They know that successfully to defeat the designs of Russia, Austria, and Germany it is not enough to fight such designs in the cabinets of ministers, or in the audience chamber of their ruler. These more progress-

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ive Turks realise that the people or race who are not in the modern movement are lost ; and the Turkish people — her thinking sons assert — are as capable of being good agriculturists, good miners, mechanics, machinists, sailors, and engineers under the newer, more modern conditions as they have proved their capacity as soldiers, to learn the Prussian goose-step and to fire Maxim guns.

Opinions respecting the future of Turkey are as much at variance as they were two hundred years ago. Every nation in Europe and the whole of the Christian world are still divided into two camps. Turkey's nearest neighbours assure you, solemnly, that the "sick man" is in his death-throes, that no amount of foreign education, as a stimulant, will ever effectually revive him. Then, presently a little war comes to prove a most disquieting and alarming amount of vigour in Europe's constitutional invalid.

England will tell you, since her semi—"protectorate" of Turkish interests has been abandoned, that "the Turk is in the way, he must go, sooner or later." She also gives you to understand that, but for Russia, it would be soon rather than later on that Turkish territory, like Joseph's coat, would be divided among the Christian brother-nations. Germany does not speak as loud, for she has certain important Turkish interests and others to further. The much disputed railway to Baghdad is said to be already her prize.

The councils of Europe, when they assemble gravely to discuss Turkey's "sad case," give the

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world and Turkey herself to understand that she will be allowed to remain a nation just so long as Europe sees in her the balancing weight in the Eastern Question — and no longer.

Turkey herself openly says nothing. When she can she acts. Of late years the Christian world has been roused not once, but several times, to a storm of indignation by acts of barbarity and cruelty that prove the Turk is still the son of his fighting fathers and the fierce defender of his own faith. The worst of the atrocities imputed to the Turk have been committed since the late war with Greece, when Europe decreed the Turks should not be permitted to keep that which she has won by her sword.

The hardest of all the battles the Turk has had to fight against European and American forces, political or military, he is fighting to-day. Within the past two decades the most invincible of all powers have been arraigned against him. The sentiment, as well as the religious sympathies, of the entire Christian world has flown to the side of those Turkish subjects who long to free themselves from Turkish rule. And, as the whole history of European development proves, religious conviction and sentimental emotionalism are powers against which neither kings nor kingdoms avail.

There is a deeper racial antagonism existing between the Turk and the European and American than we willingly concede. Below the chasm separating the religious, political, and civil life of the Turk and that of the American and European, there lies the deepest

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of all divisions — that of race antagonism. The Turk belongs to the Turanian branch of the human family, the Latin and Anglo-Saxon to the Aryan division. And between the two there rolls, as there has ever rolled, the broad ocean of divergence that separates a whole continent of ideas. The strongest characteristic of the Aryan is his instinct for self-government. The Turanian instinct is as strongly set towards a despotic form of government. The whole history of Europe since the Christian era has been the history of ideas working through acts, the sentiment of the liberty of the individual, of personal freedom, of religious as well as political freedom, the emancipation of women, the abolition of slavery, and, in more recent years, the emancipation also of the labourer, — in the twenty centuries since Christ preached love and humanity to our world these ideas have been the ruling forces that have inspired men to their best, and to their most sustained heroic efforts.

The Turk — the Turanian — who has had the power to thrust himself into the province of Aryan territory where these Aryan ideas were fighting for conquest, remains more or less what he was when he crossed the Bosphorus. He is still despotic in his instincts, with all the conservatism which characterises both the political and the religious mould of character peculiar to the unchangeable Turanian. Susceptible to certain modifications he has indeed proved himself, as we have seen. How far these modifications may go, and what their ultimate effects may be, this lies in the womb of the future.

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Intelligent as the Turk is, he finds certain so-called Christian practices difficult to understand. Political promises are made and broken, but that is, of course, politically, to be expected. Justice, humanity, liberty, these are words he is perpetually hearing dinned in his ears. Yet when he looks abroad, across the seas to the land from whence these words ring loudest, as a philosopher and student of life and history, he does not find these ideals quite fully realised. He is accused of every form of barbarity known to human cruelty. Yet in America, not much more than two hundred years ago, he reads that witches were burnt in New England. The history of our treatment of the Indian seems to him barbaric; the freedom given to slaves is a humanitarian act that dates but thirty years back; and, in thinking of certain dark pages in his own more recent history, he finds a grim consolation in reflecting upon the slow growth of all men towards a higher humanity; for in the killing of Bulgarians and Armenians—the latter very troublesome subjects whose revolt must be stamped out or the Armenian will succeed and win his freedom as has the Bulgarian—during the Turk's attempts to do this he picks up, perchance, a recent American paper, and in his reading of the lynching of negroes by an infuriated mob, as some years ago he also saw the recorded horrors committed by a certain secret society called the Kuklux, he once more reflects on the truism of how very universal an instinct is inhuman cruelty.

If the Turk should arrogate to himself a breadth of political and religious tolerance few European nations

can prove, we of all people should be the last to smile at his presumption. For we are among those who have presented him—and who continue to present to him—with one of the most conspicuous opportunities for the display of his courtesy and his toleration. If an American missionary can proudly boast before an American audience of the numbers of zealous revolutionaries contributed by Robert College to the Bulgarian outbreak, and if other missionaries throughout Turkey can do their utmost to shield and to help Armenian conspirators, we can scarcely wonder at the mixture of delicate scorn in the Turk's smile when we talk glibly of American standards of honour and fair dealing.

We shall continue to meet the scorn with a fine indifference, as our sympathies will also continue to run out toward every Armenian and to every other human being—of whatsoever race or colour—who lifts up his hands to heaven, with the cry of "freedom" upon his lips. For we are Aryans and Christians; and stronger than our sense of logic, or our sentiments of political justice or international honour, I fear, is our belief in the principle of liberty.

In the future history of Turkey, of the actual making of which some of us may be living witnesses, there are two factors which may play, each in its turn, possibly, a very important rôle.

The vitality of the Turk is, and has ever been, one of his most distinguishing characteristics. It is this constitutional strength which makes it well-nigh impossible to predicate anything concerning his near

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future. It is to this amazing vigour among her men that Turkey owes largely the fact of her army being still one of the best fighting corps in Europe. The common Moslem soldier is, as we have seen, hardy, vigorous, skilled in the use of weapons, and a lover of battle for its own sake. He is also, it must never be forgotten, a devout Mussulman. From the Christian standpoint this fact alone singles him out as ripe for extermination. Politically the living, intense belief and faith thrilling the breast of every Moslem soldier, his belief in his God, in his Prophet, in his Sultan, and his fanatical conviction, as we term it, of the ultimate triumph of Islamism,—these remain as factors to be counted with.

In the past century Turkish arms were never beaten in the field. Her still almost inexhaustible recruiting resources in Asia Minor make this fact at times, disconcerting to those who have already signed Turkey's death-warrant. At a period in the development of warfare when modern invention has placed in the hands of the defendant the deadliest effects of its new war-machinery, we have entered upon the era when defensive wars are the likeliest to be either entirely successful or unduly prolonged. Modern guns, in the hands of such soldiers as come down from the mountains of Anatolia and the Asian hills, may still play the rôle that the war-machinery of the sixteenth century did under such leaders as Suleyman the Magnificent.

In still another and less fearsome way, possibly, may Turkey's greater future be settled. After the mines of

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America and Africa have been emptied of their treasures of iron, of silver, and of gold, and the coming captains of industry turn to new worlds of conquest, Turkey in Asia must inevitably be brought within the commercial sphere of influence. Who knows but that it may be Americans who may be called upon, or who may feel themselves called upon, if not to settle, at least to help Turkey herself to settle the Eastern Question? The flag of our country Turkish courtesy permits to float on the well-guarded shores of the Bosphorus may be the forerunner of a wider, a less disturbing influence. When the new world discovers the treasures that lie hidden in the bosom of the Asian hills the rôle played by the gallant Ertoghrul may be repeated. We, in our turn, may fly to the rescue of the weaker power, but with bloodless weapons, with our "battle-axes turned into pick-axes, and our helmets into bee-hives," to teach Turkey that her greatest strength, save that which she possesses in the moral qualities of her people, lie in her yet un-worked soil.

THE END





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